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THE PRIEST

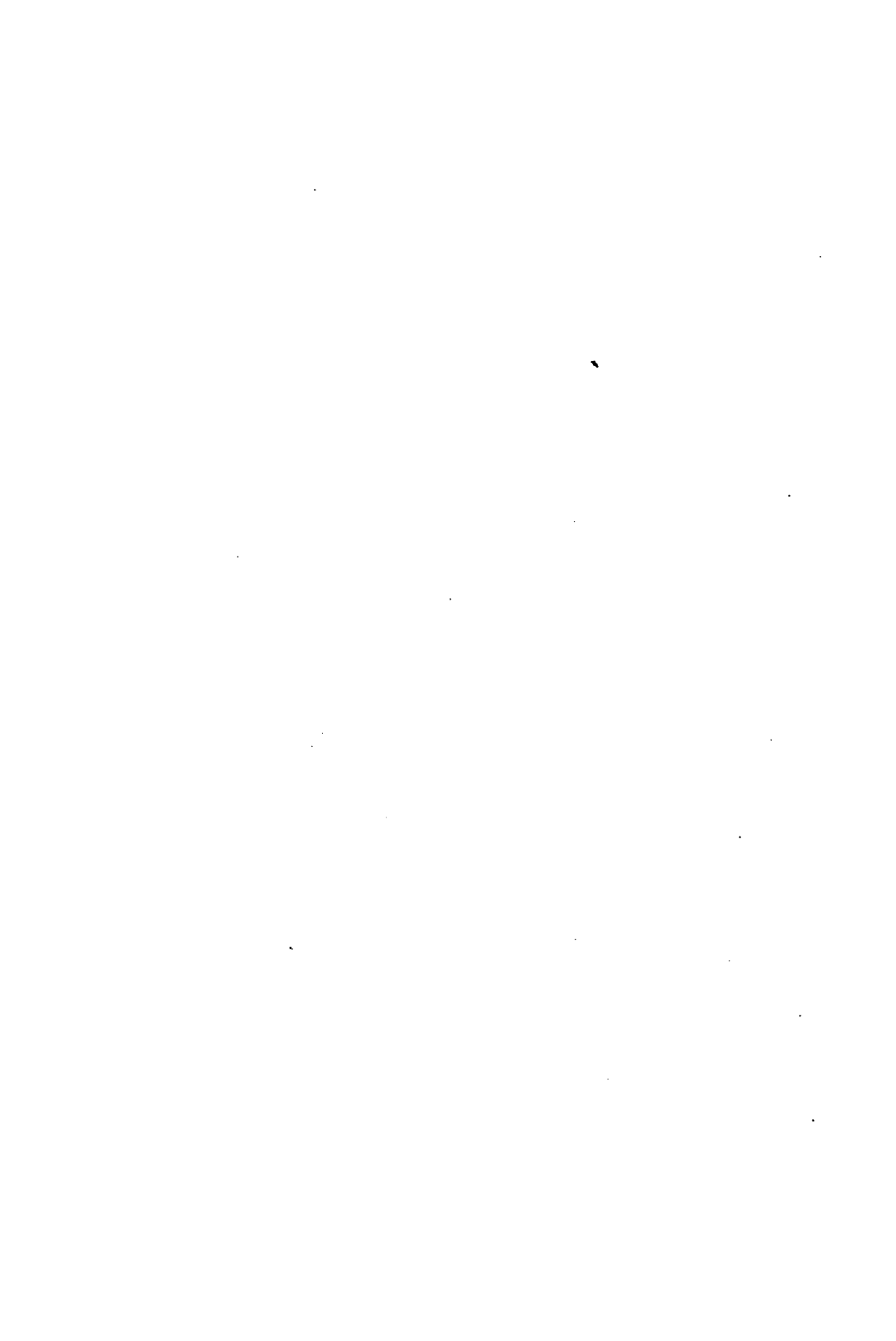
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Sullivan, William Lawrence

THE PRIEST

A TALE OF MODERNISM
IN NEW ENGLAND

BY
THE AUTHOR OF "LETTERS TO HIS
HOLINESS, POPE PIUS X"

THIRD EDITION



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PREFATORY NOTE

Because a piece of fiction has taken Modernism for its subject, it should not be forthwith condemned as a mere manifesto which usurps a province of art for crude ends of partisanship or revolt. Modernism has every right in the world to literary treatment in the forms of fiction or the drama. For if it is the function of these departments of literature to set forth the histories of human hearts and the crises of human conscience, it is doubtful if they could find in the aggregate of contemporaneous experiences a richer field than Modernism. Modernism began with the scholar. It is ending with the martyr. It first appeared as a movement of critical scholarship concerned with debates as to the date and authorship of certain ancient scriptures, and the validity of divers venerable texts and institutions. That aspect of the matter is now subsidiary. To-day the most vital interest of Modernism lies in the conflict — the fierce and sombre conflict — which it has flung upon many choice spirits of the race; the conflict between sincerity and enforced conformity; between ruthless Truth and life's tenderest affections; between the mind that would follow its new light and the heart that would cling to its lifelong loyalties. It is a desolate struggle, fought out in the presence of strange spectators: on the one hand, loneliness, ignominy, penury; on the other, honor, fidelity and the memories of those faithful

PREFATORY NOTE

ones who have consecrated the hallowed Calvaries of the world. Here surely, where life works so mightily, literature may linger reverently, and may make of these gropings, conflicts, sufferings, a theme that is worthy of her highest forms of art.

No apology, then, is needed for the choice of the subject matter of this book. But perhaps concerning the execution of the enterprise the author should say a word which he is in doubt whether to call an apology or not. At all events, here it is in all frankness. The author's deepest feeling all through the book is for what may be called, in a large sense, religion rather than art; for a faithful reproduction of a profound spiritual struggle rather than for the technical perfection of the narrative which describes it. He has indeed done his poor best in this latter respect also. He has tried not to forget that he was writing a story and that his conscientious endeavor should be to make it as good a story as was in his power. But having had an opportunity to observe very close at hand many of the interior experiences and some even of the external events herein written down, it has been primary with him to transcribe these experiences and events with what vividness they possess in his own mind, and with what emotion they evoke in his own heart.

Whatever, then, his falling short of the professional fiction-code, this he cannot help feeling, that this book is, in a vital way, true; that the tragic processes on which it lifts a corner of the

PREFATORY NOTE

veil are to-day going on in hundreds of beset and harassed hearts; and that the utterance which these processes find here is above all genuine, above all sincere. In these primitive qualities, too, there may possibly be manifested a certain form and species of art which, perhaps, are somewhat overlooked by the rules of the masters and the schedules of the schools. The author has sometimes beguiled himself with thinking so. But however that may be, this is a chapter of contemporary life that is little known because essentially solitary, and a picture of present-day reality that gives few outward signs because it lies in that province of experience about which men are most sensitive and most reticent. To such as are interested in this deeper side of life, in this profounder region of reality, this modest contribution to the literature of a great movement is respectfully offered by

THE AUTHOR.

I

A New England winter lives long, as the world knows, but only those with experience of it are aware how hard it dies. In rural New England above all, the last state of the storm-god's deviltry is worse than the first. Just as it is time for him decently to depart, say about the first week in March, he shows the perversity of the possessed, lashing himself into paroxysms of tempest; flinging up mighty snow-ramparts in a night; freezing tight every pond, lake, and stream; and from his frozen fortresses howling mad defiance to the timid reconnoitering of Spring. Then does rural New England look inhospitable indeed. The streets are deserted save for a traveller now and then who plods along with head down, hands in pockets, coat collar buttoned about his mouth, and with a general air of being about a desperately disagreeable business; the bare trees creak in every stiffened joint, and clash icy branches together in the forlornest of choruses; the white fields stretch away beyond the huddling houses which seem to be shivering too; and the dismal hills in the distance appear ominously like posted sentinels to keep this cold domain inviolate.

A stranger of anti-Yankee prejudices approaching a New England hamlet at such a time might well find confirmation of his personal antipathies in the wild aspect of the scene before him. How typical of Puritan austerity these biting winds!

How suggestive of the harsh unfriendliness of the Pilgrim stock these barriers of snow! How fit a habitation for an unlovely race this forbidding country where the coming of a genial season is so long delayed and its reluctant stay so short! Unjust prejudices these, as we to whom New England is dear, to whom she is or once was, home, are well aware. We know that her heart is not wintry nor the springs of her affection frozen. We know that not all the snow and ice of the three centuries since the Pilgrims came, have chilled the kindlier feelings of those that dwell upon this rugged soil. An exterior of low temperature their environment may indeed have given them; but in no hearts that beat live warmer sympathies and more ardent loyalties. But know this as surely, believe it as strongly as we will, plenty there are who do not believe it; who judging the inner from the outer, and too quick to class together the material and the spiritual, regard the Yankee, his climate, and his soil, as a trinity of inhospitalities, which it behooves warm-hearted, comfort-loving men to let alone, and abandon to its fog and chill, its storms and stubble.

And so saying, we are brought to the opening of our story; for we are now to become acquainted with a man who, as we take our first look at him, wears every appearance of being in precisely this state of mind. He had got off the evening train at a Massachusetts village, which will figure in this story under the name of Axton, at the time of year we have mentioned, and in the conditions of

weather we have described. Having ordered his luggage sent to the hotel — was he guilty of a suspicion of a smile as he said that last word? — he stood on the station-platform and gazed down at the little town that lay before him. A survey of Axton need not detain him long. He saw near-by the public square, in the centre of which stood a snow-robed pump with a trough for horses; a half-dozen shops; an enlarged cottage which he had been told was the hotel; and one large building distinguished by a tower, which he correctly surmised might be the town-hall. Three streets led away from the square, one the main street on which were several substantial, and one or two elegant, houses; the other two, highways of less pretensions, having houses of comfortable and cleanly aspect, but belonging evidently to tenants of more limited means. Beyond lay open country, terminating in the foot-hills of a distant mountain-range.

It was none too cheerful a prospect, with the early twilight rapidly deepening into darkness, a bitter wind sweeping through the valley, and dim lights from stores and dwellings falling upon glistening snow that lay deep about every building. With a shudder the stranger left the station and walked toward the hotel. "How unutterably dismal!" he said to himself; "and I fear the Yankee inhabitants will prove as churlish as their weather. I'll suffer another kind of chill when they find that a priest has come among them."

Entering the front door of the hotel he found himself alone in a narrow room that served as an office. In the middle of the floor a stove glowed red-hot; and he approached it, throwing open his overcoat as he did so, thereby discovering the Roman collar worn by priests. While he was beguiling the time with gazing rather wearily at the cheap prints on the wall, a door that led to the interior of the establishment opened, and a sharp-featured man of middle age entered, and without a word pushed the register toward the guest, and held out to him a pen freshly dipped in muddy ink. The priest wrote in a rapid, nervous hand: "Reverend Ambrose Hanlon."

"Are you a priest?" were the proprietor's first words.

"Yes."

"First one I've ever had here. Goin' to stay long?"

"So I expect. I have been appointed pastor of the Catholics in this town."

"Don't say. Hadn't heard nothin' about it. Goin' to build a church?"

"That is usually the task of a new parish."

Guarded and even uncordial as the conversation had been thus far, mine host, whose name we may as well know at once was the good old Yankee one of Nahum Cuttle, on receiving the information of the new church, broke out vehemently with:

"Well, all I can say is, I hope you will make something of those foreigners that have flooded

this town ever sense the car-shops was built. There's a bad lot among 'em, I tell you. Don't deny that some of 'em ain't all right; but there's a wicked element there, 'Talians, Poles and Hebrews, that's formed a Socialist club — only another name for Anarchist club, I think — and they're promising no end of trouble. They'll be in your congregation, too. Only fifteen or twenty Catholics here, till they came, a year ago."

"At least I shall not be responsible for the Hebrews," remarked the new pastor, trying to smile, though his dejection had visibly deepened with every word that Nahum uttered. Then he asked: "In what way are these foreigners threatening trouble?"

"Lots o' ways," answered Nahum. "Every Sunday they have a meeting, and some scoundrel tells 'em, sometimes in English, but mostly in a foreign language, that this gov'ment's got to be destroyed and all the money divided around, share alike. Then they make speeches against religion, and say all church-folks is fools and all ministers hypocrites. Worst of it is they're organizin' now, and becomin' citizens so they can outvote us and set up an Anarchist town right here in Axton, where our New England forefathers have lived in peace and contentment for two hundred years. I tell you, sir, bad times are comin' to this place, that's all I've got to say."

"It is quite enough," said Father Hanlon, disconsolately. "At all events I shall want a room

for some time; and if you can get supper soon. I shall be greatly obliged to you."

While the Reverend Ambrose Hanlon is sitting down to his first meal within his spiritual jurisdiction, we may as well become better acquainted with him. As a boy and young man, Ambrose distinguished himself by a remarkable proficiency in studies in all the schools that he attended. At the public high school he led his classes during his entire course; and by his naturally candid and modest character was a great favorite of both teachers and fellow-pupils. Entering a Jesuit college at the age of eighteen, he again rose rapidly to class leadership and became marked as the most brilliant student in the school. The black-robed fathers and scholastics who taught him, admired him — and coveted him. Frederick the Great is reported to have said that he did not share in the harsh feeling which the Jesuits had drawn upon themselves by their well-known endeavors to secure the best boys in their colleges for the Order. "Why blame them," said Frederick, "for seeking the most promising subjects? Rulers of states act likewise in drawing to the public service the best statesmen and financiers the kingdom affords." If we are content with this royal logic, we shall not censure too severely the astute sons of Ignatius Loyola for their pious devices in alluring young Hanlon to their membership. We will simply state the fact that they did their utmost to get him. One of the fathers, especially skilful

in this divine diplomacy, worked himself into the boy's intimacy and friendship. He learned that the youth was intending to enter the seminary and become a priest of the diocese. Then the siege proper began. Gradually and cautiously this man, Father Stockly by name, led Ambrose to perceive the great glory of the Jesuit order. He told him of the Society's long list of saints, among them angelic Aloysius, spotless Berchmans, valiant Xavier, mighty Ignatius. He pictured to the boy's devout imagination, the host of Jesuit heroes in the mission-field, from Jogues and Bréboeuf, murdered by the Iroquois, to the Society's young priests who are dying to-day in equatorial Africa. He laid particular stress upon the scholars of the Company, Laynez the wonder of the Council of Trent, de Lugo the Aquinas of moral theology, and Suarez the peer of any theologian that ever lived. He spoke of the present great work of the Order in educating young men; of its mystical life of prayer and penance; of its unimpeachable orthodoxy and its almost military devotion to the See of Rome; of its renown without and of its peace and power within. At times he referred to the secular priest's comparative inefficiency; how lonely such a man is; and with what miserable matters — the collecting of money and the building of churches — half his time and energy are wasted.

We cannot wonder that so spiritual and brilliant a boy as Ambrose should be captivated. The Society appeared before him transfigured, glori-

fied, the nursery of scholars and the home of saints. He fondly thought of himself as a Jesuit novice, clothed with the habit that had been worn by so great a multitude of holy men. In many an hour of prayer he turned moist eyes to the altar, beseeching his Lord for the grace of some day belonging to the Order that is called of Jesus. He told Father Stockly that he wanted to become a Jesuit, and besought his prayers that so heavenly a favor might be vouchsafed him. For months he thus dreamed and prayed and hoped, in the spell of an ambition that made all else in life insignificant and mean.

But there was a difficulty in the way; and it resulted in Ambrose's not joining the Jesuits. He had no near kindred living except his mother and sister,—his father, a veteran of the civil war, having died ten years before. His mother was an invalid, and while she gladly and proudly gave her consent to his becoming a secular priest, since in such a state of life he could often visit her, and even have her with him after a while,—she would be grievously, perhaps fatally, wounded by the all but perpetual separation which his going to the Jesuits would involve. Still, even this supreme consideration hardly checked the boy from following out his absorbing desire. Father Stockly once gave him a book on choosing one's vocation, in which it was set forth that even should a mother fling herself upon the threshold of her home to keep her son from entering a religious order, he

should step across her body and go, obeying the voice of God rather than the appeal of parental love. This narration moved Ambrose profoundly, and he meditated making a similar sacrifice. He mentioned the matter to Father Stockly, who assured him that it would be a most acceptable offering to the Sacred Heart of Christ. But fortunately he broached the project to his sister Margaret. Margaret was the younger by two years, but womanhood was in her, and she possessed in consequence a sane outlook upon human relations from which her poor, romancing brother was woefully remote. She showed, too, on the occasion that Providence had blessed her with woman's tongue as well as with woman's intuition. By the time she had concluded her vituperation, in the course of which she observed that her brother was a selfish coward even to think of deserting his home forever; that he would be the murderer of his mother if he did such a thing; and that there was more unhealthy rubbish in spiritual books than he with all his learning had ever suspected, the notion of the "great renunciation" had been effectively driven from Ambrose's distracted mind. They kissed and made up when the storm was passed; and Ambrose promised his brave little sister that he would not murder his mother for all the religious orders in the world.

But a Jesuit in spirit and desire he remained; and although he entered the ecclesiastical seminary of the diocese, the Society was still his ideal, as

his letters to Father Stockly repeatedly declared. This seminary in which Ambrose spent four years was noted as being particularly "safe." That is to say, it was kept sedulously guarded from modern liberalism. The Right Reverend Sebastian Shyrne, bishop of the diocese, was a man of both despotic temperament and stringent orthodoxy. From him the seminary professors received their orders, and these orders bore perpetually on his lordship's wish and the professors' duty to fill the minds of the seminarists with horror and hatred for higher criticism and advanced Catholicism. Once when the young professor of dogmatic theology ventured to begin a course of lectures on the origins and early history of the sacrament of Penance, he was sharply rebuked by the bishop, who informed him that theology must be taught in the good old scholastic method, and that of historical, or, as he called it, "evolutionary" theology there must be none. "Please remember," said the bishop, in concluding his reprimand, "that the master to be followed in my seminary is Thomas Aquinas, not Hermann Harnack."

"Adolf Harnack, you ignorant booby!" said the professor to himself as he left the episcopal presence. But the lectures on the history of Penance were discontinued at once.


Thus it happened that for four years Ambrose Hanlon's mind was curtailed from the light of modern thought. Not once in all that time nor for some time after indeed, did he dream of the vast

structure of theological erudition and critical research raised by nineteenth century scholarship. He lived and thought in the past and gave over his fine intelligence to the subtleties of metaphysical theologizing. At the commencement exercises, which concluded his second year in theology, he read a long paper in Latin on the matutine and vespertine knowledge of the angels. The bishop, who was presiding at the exercises, had taken a rather disedifying nap during the reading of the dissertation; but at the end he congratulated the young author, and advised him to continue throughout life a devoted student of St. Thomas. "The world is running after mischievous novelties," said the bishop; "and many there are who are suffering shipwreck from their biblical criticism and their so-called historical method. But do you, Mr. Hanlon, and all you gentlemen of my seminary, eschew these pestilential pseudo-sciences. They are based on pride and conducted in impiety. Stand fast by your St. Thomas, Suarez and de Lugo! Let Aquinas be your master, not Hermann Harnack." This last phrase had evidently caught the fancy of the great man, and if he continued to misname the German scholar, few in his audience recognized the blunder.

Not only did this sort of training estrange Ambrose from modern life, but it made him positively hostile to it. To him the world was hastening to perdition. The Church was beset by heresy; the old supremacy of the Papacy was reduced to a

shadow; and all-conquering science was in the hands of the infidel. From such a world the boy turned away in bitterness and sorrow. He could not feel himself a citizen of it. If perforce he lived in it, it was only as an alien and antagonist. The true home of his thought and affection was the Middle Ages — the Ages of Faith. That epoch he idealized. He pictured it — so lively were his enthusiasms and so dormant his critical powers — as his Catholic text-books pictured it, that is to say, as a time of unquestioning faith and universal piety. Then all Europe was like a mighty monastery with the Pope as Lord Abbot, princes and kings his loyal sub-priors, and the common people as a host of lay-brothers spending their days and nights in penance and prayer. How Ambrose, beguiled by this grotesque conception, longed to have lived in those days! He would have been a Benedictine monk — so his fancy ran — and would have written a tome or two on the divine attributes, or on the circumincession of the Trinity! Alas, that modernism had spoiled the world; that church and state were one no longer; that the Inquisition could put down heresy no more; and that a false cry of Liberty had driven from the minds of men the grand old Catholic ideas of obedience and authority!

At the end of the fourth year in the seminary, Ambrose was sent to Rome to complete his course. There, as was inevitable, the ideas which had grown in upon him took deeper root, and his severance



from modern scholarship became still more complete. His two years in the college of the Propaganda he devoted to Thomistic theology and Canon Law; and he gained with high distinction the doctorate in divinity. Of scientific history he knew scarcely anything; of biblical criticism nothing; and of such sciences as Sociology and Comparative Religion he had barely heard the names.

Three months after his return from Rome he was sent to Axton. With what reluctance he entered upon his charge we have seen. Not that he was not zealous. No man could be more devoted to his vocation. But he felt himself wholly unfitted for the practical business of building up a new parish. For money-collecting and all the miserable anxieties connected with stone and mortar, he had a horror. His tastes were dominantly intellectual; and his long absorption in study had fitted him for the class-room rather than for the roughshod work that lay before him.

Such was Father Ambrose Hanlon as, at the age of twenty-seven he entered upon his pastorate. Misgivings thronged upon him as he sat at his first meagre supper in Nahum Cuttle's hostelry, and he was little disposed to check them. How was he to control so untoward a situation? A congregation of Italian anarchists; a community of hostile Puritans; a church to be built and paid for; sermons to be preached to people incapable of appreciating any intellectual appeal; this was the lot in which he, a delicate, dreamy student, had

been placed by ill-fortune. He thought of his essay on the matutine and vespertine knowledge of the angels, and of his final examination in Rome when he brilliantly demonstrated that God foreknows the future free acts of men not by the ordinary knowing-processes of Deity, but by a special kind of divine cognition called "*scientia media*"; and a whimsical smile played for an instant upon his lips at the ineptitude of all this for the work before him.

"Well," said he to himself, "*in nomine Domini* let me begin it. It is part of a priest's sacrifice. If I cannot succeed I will at least honorably fail. And now for a night-view of my parish."

"Goin' out?" asked Nahum, as the priest took his overcoat from the rack.

"Yes," answered Ambrose; "you have given me so freezing a report of this parish of mine that I am going to see if the zero weather outside will not warm my blood a little."

Nahum smiled, not ill-pleased to find that his guest was disposed to be genial.

"Ever attend a New England town-meetin'?" he asked.

"Never," said Ambrose; "I was raised in the city."

"Well," observed Nahum, "we're goin' to have a town-meetin' to-night in the town-hall, and perhaps you might find it worth while to drop in. Mebbe there'll be some excitement and mebbe there won't. A town-meetin' is uncertain. Sometimes

it's like a Quaker revival, and again it's like a convention of the Molly Maguires. But I rather think you'd better go. Fact is, I advise you to go."

"Very well," said the priest with an amused smile, "I'll go. If it turns out to be a Quaker revival it will be soothing, and I am tired; and if it is of the Molly Maguire sort, I shall be glad to see so much excitement in Axton, where I never expected to find it."

So Father Hanlon went to the town meeting. Business was already under way as he entered quite unobserved and took a seat near the door. The proceedings were dreary enough. Should the village school be enlarged? Should Main Street be paved? Should the appropriation for the fire-company be increased? These and a half-dozen other similar questions were debated and put to vote. Drowsily murmuring Nahum's expression, "a Quaker revival," the priest settled himself comfortably for a doze. He was aroused very soon, however, by a strident voice calling, "Mr. Moderator!"

"Mr. Wakefield has the floor," answered the moderator, who was just about to suggest that a motion to adjourn would be in order.

The man answering to the name of Wakefield stepped from his place to the front of the main aisle and faced the assembled citizens. He was of tall, spare build, of years approaching sixty, and in his cold eye and sharp features one might search

long for any trace of the gentler qualities of humankind. Evidently greatly agitated, he began in a harsh, high voice:

“Mr. Moderator and Fellow-Citizens: Before we adjourn I wish to bring up a matter which, while it is not mentioned in the articles of the town-meeting proclamation, is nevertheless of vital consequence to this community. Up to little more than one year ago our village of Axton, which we all love, was a place where thrived the best traditions of New England and Massachusetts. We had scarcely any foreigners among us. We lived in simple tranquillity. We worshipped according to the faith of our colonial ancestors. How terrible, how menacing is the change that has occurred in twelve months! The building of the carshops has brought among us a class of aliens with whom we have nothing in common, and to whom the traditions of our country and our state are not only meaningless but contemptible. These men, nothing short of anarchists, have now organized. They are conspiring to gain possession of our town government. They are desecrating our Sabbath by revolutionary meetings and blasphemous harangues. In a word, they are threatening to destroy all that patriotism and religion have endeared to us.

“And now I hear that a Roman Catholic priest is to come here and build a church of his denomination. If this ill-omened thing takes place, foreignism will be established in the midst of us for-

ever. We have already been too negligent; but there is still time to save Axton from a contamination that is unto death. You men of property and social standing, men of Puritan blood and Pilgrim faith, I appeal to you not to allow the walls of a Roman temple to be raised upon this village soil. Refuse to sell a foot of ground to this follower of a foreign potentate! The land belongs to us. Let us hold out against every seduction of profit which crafty Rome may put before us, until Rome is baffled and her impertinent priest betakes himself off, defeated by our unanimous and uncompromising opposition."

Trembling and pale, the man sat down amid a stillness as of death. The invective was so utterly unexpected and so entirely novel that the audience seemed for an instant too dazed either to applaud or disapprove it. Just as the citizens were coming to themselves, as it were, and the clapping of hands began to mingle with a few faint hisses, a voice of marvelous melody and power rang through the hall:

"Mr. Moderator!"

"The Reverend Mr. Danforth has the floor," announced the moderator, who had been quite disconcerted by the sudden turn of events.

The Reverend Mr. Danforth strode forward from a seat near the rear of the hall, until he stood in the very spot from which Mr. Wakefield had fired his shot at Rome. There he turned and faced the meeting. A striking picture he made. About

thirty years of age, six feet in height, loosely built, with shoulders of extraordinary breadth, and possessing a fine spiritual face, whose great dark eyes were a very mirror of purity and candor, minister Danforth was, beyond question, a highly favored child both of nature and of grace.

"It is greatly to be regretted," he said, "that Mr. Wakefield has gone outside the proper business of this town-meeting to arouse feelings which are more dangerous, I am constrained to say, than any peril which we are likely to encounter from the car-shops. It is still more deplorable that he has committed the grievous injustice of insinuating that a certain branch of the Christian religion is equally menacing with anarchism and revolution. That insinuation is intemperate and untrue. I take a second rank to no man here in love of country, and I, as well as all other men here, would give my life to preserve it from any foreign or domestic peril. That there is a peril in certain conditions around us even here in little Axton I clearly recognize. That furthermore there is a great measure of irreconcilableness between the American spirit and the tenets of a certain theology, I am fully aware. But gentlemen, these dangers, these obstacles, will be removed by education, and by a proper training in the ideas and ideals on which our republic is based. Arrogance and hatred and intolerance will never remove them. Teach those who may be out of harmony with our constitution and civilization what this country means,

what its destiny is, and what it has already accomplished for humanity, and I am confident that every honest man, wherever his birthplace and whatever his creed, will love our country from his heart and will defend it as zealously as any patriot that ever fought beneath the flag. There is no un-Americanism so mischievous as that which would despise the foreigners, and hold contemptuously aloof from those who come to us from other lands. The first dictate of patriotism is that we should go among these people, bear for a while with their alien attitude, and by fraternal and self-sacrificing service bring them to see that our country is worthy of their reverence and love. If this nation shall ever die, if the glorious traditions and holy hopes of our fathers shall ever be brought to naught, it will not be because foreigners have overcome us, but because we Americans and children of Americans, have been stupid, proud and foolish, and unfaithful to the work passed on to us by our founders, of educating the world in liberty.

“And as for this Roman Catholic chapel, I trust it will be built upon as good a site as our village affords. I trust that we shall all co-operate with our brethren of that faith in erecting their house of worship. But whatever anyone else may do, I publicly declare that I shall give every service in my power to the Catholic pastor in the difficult work that lies before him. I cannot forget that two patriots of my name and blood lay dead upon the field of Malvern Hill side by side with the

fallen heroes of a Catholic brigade. And I know that to-day, were it necessary, the co-religionists of those that fell beside my Puritan kinsmen on that bloody slope, would as gladly go forth to die in the same sacred cause if any danger threatened our country's flag. America for Americans! Yes, but I greet as my fellow-American and my brother-citizen, every man of good will that dwells beneath the Stars and Stripes."

A tempest of cheers rose from the throats of the Axton citizens as the young minister took his seat. A score of hands reached out to congratulate him, a hundred felicitations were addressed to him, until what with applaudings and vociferations, the old town-hall had not shaken to such a tumult since the recruiting days of '61. Then at what we are accustomed to hear called the psychological moment, some ingenious body began to let down the stage curtain, which curtain, as it happened, was nothing less than a huge American flag. Slowly the beautiful banner descended, first its stripes of red and white, then its star-filled field of blue, until in all its thrilling loveliness it gleamed and swayed before the burghers of Axton. Right royally they acclaimed it. Every man was on his feet as though the entire responsibility of the salute depended upon him alone. Finally out of the clamor rose one clear and mighty voice:

"Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last
gleaming?"

Beside itself with enthusiasm, the whole assembly took up the melody from minister Danforth's lips, and sang the flag-hymn of the republic in an ecstasy of fervor. Not till the last refrain was finished:

"And the Star-Spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave,"

was there the least disposition to listen to a motion to adjourn; and even as the men left the hall after this most extraordinary town-meeting in the history of Axton, the anthem still lingered on the outer steps and in the street.

The last man to leave the hall was Ambrose Hanlon. With a long and loving look upon the emblem of our liberties, he turned and walked away, bearing in his heart a new and auspicious courage and content.

II

The next morning Father Hanlon was about to set out for Mr. Danforth's residence when two visitors were announced. One of them, the Reverend Joseph Dooran, Ambrose knew slightly, as he had been a frequent visitor at the seminary while Ambrose studied there. The other was the Reverend Richard O'Murtagh, an Irish pastor of the old school, who had charge of a parish ten miles from Axton. After Ambrose had thanked them for the promptness of their neighborly call, Father O'Murtagh opened the general conversation with the remark:

"Well, me boy, ye'll have a hard row to hoe in the stony soil of Axton."

"Yes," Ambrose answered, "I expect my share of difficulties. But at all events I think I shall find the non-Catholic people more friendly than I had dared to hope."

"I don't know about that," was the old gentleman's response. "These Puritans here have no great reputation for friendliness. And as for the church, where would they get any sympathy for it? Didn't their forefathers persecute it? What reason have ye for thinking that the tribe has changed?"

"The spirit of toleration is growing," remarked Ambrose.

"No," asserted the irreconcilable Irishman,

"the spirit of indifferentism is growing. But that means not toleration but contempt."

"Father O'Murtagh is right," interposed the Reverend Joseph Dooran, a very small man of quick, nervous manner; "Toleration, properly understood, proceeds from high and religious motives. But these people have not enough Christian dogma left to possess such principles. They have so completely lost religion that they are too little interested in it even to attack it."

"The opinion that you have both expressed," said Ambrose, "has been my own for practically all my life; and I dare say it still retains a hold upon my mind. But I have reason to expect friendliness from the non-Catholics here and I would like to credit them with some little nobility of motive in manifesting it. At all events their motive is a matter of fact and observation rather than of theory. Father O'Murtagh, have you associated much with the non-Catholics of your parish?"

"Have I what?" was O'Murtagh's contemptuous question.

Ambrose repeated his inquiry.

"No," was the gruffly spoken answer. "I have not associated with them. We get on better by standing as far apart socially as we do religiously. From time to time they have asked me to address public meetings; once one of the ministers invited me to preach in his church; at another time the school committee sent word that they would be pleased to have me deliver the invocation at the graduation exercises; and seven years ago I was

offered a place on the board of trustees of the public library. But I told them, one and all, that I had no time for any work outside my own parochial duties. Hanlon, don't forget this, we Catholics must not mix with outsiders. That's all there is to it. We must gather ourselves together into a separate body, insisting upon our exclusive possession of the truth of God. To mingle too much socially, and to mingle at all religiously, with heretics is to open the door to liberalism. We must hold aloof."

"You cannot deny, Hanlon," said Dooran, "that Father O'Murtagh has expressed sound Catholic theology. You cannot deny that Leo XIII says practically as much in his encyclical to America the '*Longinqua oceani*.'"

"I have not attempted to deny it," Ambrose answered sharply, vexed, as on two or three previous occasions he had been, by Dooran's patronizing air and his assumption of infallibility; "but it seems to me that if the open-door policy is dangerous to Catholicity, the closed-door policy may be carried so far as to be even more dangerous. At least we ought to make it clear that our exclusiveness is only doctrinal. In all things pertaining to patriotism and the common good we ought not to lay ourselves open to the charge of having less good will than other Americans."

"Patriotism is all right in its place," O'Murtagh replied. "There is no fear for our patriotism; we have proved it often enough. But neither pa-

triotism nor any other secular matter should touch upon the Catholic religion, which is not of this world and must not be contaminated with the things of this world. Last year a Catholic Grand Army man died in my parish. The body was brought into the church, and I went out upon the altar to say the requiem mass. As I stepped into the sanctuary, what should I see but an American flag resting upon the coffin. 'Take that flag out of the church!' said I to the sexton. And he took it out. Right enough in its place, it was a secular intrusion in the house of God. The town fell into a fit about it, but small concern their indignation was to me."

Ambrose Hanlon, as we have said, was the son of a Union soldier. No lesson of his life had been more vigorously drilled into him than the lesson of patriotism from the lips of his veteran father. The lesson had been forgotten, one would be tempted to suppose, in those fond dreams of an impressionable youth while under the spell of a theology which finds itself ill at ease with the present and loves to linger about the grave-stones of the past. But theologies are always academic and artificial; patriotism is an elemental impulse of the blood. It was no decadent dreamer, but the son of a soldier that stood with flashing eyes before the Reverend Richard O'Murtagh.

"Did you do that thing?" he exclaimed.

"Did I do that thing?" repeated O'Murtagh, whose long years of domineering authority over

the simple people of a country parish had not prepared him to bear contradiction gracefully. "Didn't ye hear me say I did it? What is the matter with ye?"

"Father O'Murtagh," said the young pastor of Axton in a quieter tone, "I must say that I regret your action. To me my country's flag is more than merely secular. It is sacred. It is the emblem of a hope and an ideal which are meant by God to be for a benediction to humanity. I believe in a truly divine purpose for our country; and the flag as the emblem of that purpose possesses a species of sanctity which makes it not only not out of place in the house of God, but most fittingly at home there."

"This is simply wild enthusiasm, Hanlon," said Dooran in his loftiest air. "It is absurdity to say that religion and patriotism are in any sense identical."

"Rank liberalism!" growled the Irishman, rising. "I want to be your friend, Hanlon," he continued, taking his hat; "and as a friend and an older man let me give you a warning. Evil days have come upon Catholicity. Liberalism has crept into her sanctuary and has poisoned the minds of hundreds of her priests. No such woe has ever before fallen upon holy mother Church. Her consecrated priests are unfilial to her and estranged from her. They are abandoning that grand old intolerant integrity of faith which has kept Catholicity vigorous, and are flocking after the blas-



phemies of higher criticism, modern broad-mindedness and other abominations of latter-day infidelity. Beware of them, for the sake of your priesthood and your faith. And as for that action of mine which you have so eloquently condemned, let me tell you that it was most cordially approved by Bishop Shyrne, who, thank God, has kept the faith."

This speech concluded, Father O'Murtagh, with a cold invitation to Ambrose to pay him a visit, took his departure. With him went the diminutive Dooran holding his head as high in the air as it was possible for one of his stature to do.

It had not been a pleasant interview, and when Father Hanlon was alone, he walked the room in no little agitation. To be called a liberal! he, the most rigid of conservatives! As though he did not detest broad views and higher criticism as thoroughly as O'Murtagh and Dooran possibly could. But these men would drive Catholicity into a corner, shut the church up as a cloister, and let the rest of mankind pitch headlong to destruction. They had lost,—so ran his thought,—the essential apostolic ambition which is not merely to hold what we now have, but to go out and conquer that portion of the world which is not yet ours.

True it is an abandoned age, hostile to Catholicity and dominated by sinful license in thinking; and revering as its masters unbelieving critics and godless scientists. But the Church must win the world again. She must send out into it apostles

and scholars to convince it of her imperishable truth. To stand aloof and make taunting faces at the blind multitudes as they rush to perdition, is worse than folly; it is a sin against the priest's primary duty of zeal. Yes, this work of re-converting modern men was the Church's, was his own vocation. And how thrilling a one! Dropping into a chair he gave himself up to his cherished dream of becoming a great scholar; of vindicating Catholicity before the world; of confuting the errors of the age; of pointing out to the men of our time their duty of returning to that invincible Catholic truth which in madness their fathers had deserted. He would study. He would write. Here in little Axton he would begin to lay the foundation of a larger life-apostolate whose word would go forth beyond the limits of this village, to the state, to the nation, summoning back wayfaring souls to the old, the beautiful, the divine and infallible Mother Church — "*Mater Ecclesia*."

Into these high meditations Nahum Cuttle's voice broke harshly, announcing that a visitor awaited the priest in the parlor. Unwillingly Father Hanlon went down stairs to be greeted by a man of about fifty, clad in the dress of a laborer. The new-comer was of tall, sinewy frame, with a merry face, the brightest of blue eyes, and features on which Hibernian nativity was as unmistakably stamped as shrewdness and mother-wit.

"Good mornin', yer Reverence," began the Celt. "Me name is Matt. Kiley, and ye're to be our pastor, I believe."

"Good morning, Matt.," returned the priest with great heartiness, for the sunshine in that honest face fell comfortingly on his heart. "Yes, I am to be your pastor, and my name is Father Hanlon."

"Well, Father, it's glad I am to see ye, and again it's not glad I am," said Matt., taking a seat in obedience to a gesture from his pastor. "Ye're a young man, Father, and perhaps an older and tougher one would be in less danger of havin' his heart broke in Axton."

"Now Matt. don't begin with discouraging me," protested the priest. "What is the matter with Axton?"

"Well, yer Reverence," answered Matt. meditatively, evidently impressed with his high privilege of giving advice to a man of learning; "ye're the shepherd of the flock, and it's sore and sorry a shepherd is whin he goes back home at night followed by only a sheep or two. It's sore and sorry he is whin he has to tell the Master that the other ninety-nine have run off gallivantin' and won't listen to the call home."

Father Hanlon, smiling faintly at Matt.'s manipulation of the parable, said:

"Well, there is some consolation in bringing in even one. But what is the trouble here? I am dying for a word of encouragement. Nothing but lamentation have I heard since I set foot in the town. One would think these Axton people were heathens."

"Those of them that are heathens, Father," re-

sponded Matt., "should be our own. That's the word, heathens! There's no other name for that wild gang at the shops, and most of them come from countries where they're supposed to be all Catholics. How d'ye account for it, Father Hanlon, at all? Why, such wild, ragin' hate against God and man ye never saw; and nearly every one of the divvles is a baptized child of the Church."

"I don't know how to account for it," answered Father Hanlon wearily.

"They'll break yer heart, Father, I'm afraid," said Matt. looking tenderly at the frail boy-priest. "If ye were one of the sledge-hammer kind I wouldn't mind; but begorra, I think yer heart is twice the size o' yer fist."

"I hope so," observed Ambrose; "I have no vocation to be a pugilist. But go on with more news about this parish of mine."

"Well," resumed Matt., putting on his amusing air of importance again; "here's how I figure it out. Ye'll have about twenty-five families scattered about here that will stand by ye. After all, that's not a bad start. Then there's the gang o' furriners, a couple o' hundred o' thim. Maybe ten out o' the whole pack will do anything for you. As for the rest all ye can pray for is that they will let ye alone."

"And the non-Catholics, what of them?" asked the priest.

"They're all right, yer Reverence," was Matt.'s prompt and positive answer. "Barrin' one or two

like Squire Wakefield — the curse o' the crows on him! — they'll be the dacintest neighbors ye ever saw in all yer thravels. Some o' thim, Father, are jools, shinin' jools. Mr. Danford, the minister, upon my word, is a king, so he is. There he is with his rich people and his fine church and his eddication — I was in his libry once and the power o' books mos' blinded me — and what is he doin'? workin' fer the bloody anarchis' furriners, no less. And as fer Dorothy Wakefield, th' ould Squire's niece, if she's not an angel in human form! She's wondherful. She's almost the breath of life to my poor darlin' little girl."

Here Matt. ceased speaking, and fumbled in his pocket for a handkerchief with which he wiped two great tears from his eyes — tears unmistakably of sorrow.

"Tell me about your little girl," interposed Father Hanlon, "is she sick?"

The bright face and merry eyes were clouded as Matt. answered:

"Father dear, she was the light of day to my eyes, my poor little Mary. She went through the high school in one class with Dorothy. The two o' thim were like sisters and were the brightest scholars in the class. But no one was the aqual of my Mary fer handsomeness. It isn't me that should talk like this, bein' her father; but ask anyone in this town about Mary Kiley, and they will tell you that not in the mim'ry of livin' man was there a girl in Axton half so beautiful. But if

she was beautiful, Father, she didn't know it. She was too humble to know it. She kept house fer me after her mother died; and read books and papers fer me; and sang from one room to the other of our little cottage like an Irish lark. It was heaven fer me to look at her. I could hardly believe that this pure angel was my own child. Then came sore misfortune. One day in winter the poor child fell on the ice — two years ago it was — and ever since she has been paralyzed. All day long I look at her lyin' on her cot and my heart breaks. She is beautifuler than ever. And, Father, listen! She has become a saint. She lives with God. I do be afraid to touch her, she is so holy. The light of heaven is on her face. You will soon see her and will understand these things better than I do. And you will find, Father Hanlon, with all respect to others, that little Mary Kiley is the whitest lily that will be cared for by your hands."

"I hope my hands may be worthy," murmured the priest. Then rising he laid his hands on Matt.'s head and said:

"My dear friend, you have given me the word of encouragement that my heart was craving. I have no fear of failure now. When a priest is assisted by the prayers and sacrifices of a saint, he cannot fail. Your dear child will avail for me before God, and will gain by her hidden life of holiness a multitude of graces for our poor little parish. It is through such as she that God's greatest work is done."

Before Matt. took his leave the conversation took a practical turn again, the burden of which was that Father Hanlon would need a sexton, and that according to all appearances, Matt. was admirably fitted for the position, to which he was forthwith appointed. Gratitude was deep in both their hearts as they said good-by, Matt.'s for an earthly favor, the priest's for what he deemed a heavenly one.

III

New England's thin soil has produced hardy if not copious harvests, none more hardy than its Puritan prejudices and prepossessions. For some of which prejudices and prepossessions this American nation can never be sufficiently thankful. As to some others, we must say of them that they were too narrow for an ampler stage of history, and as incapable of guiding the complex society of a great republic, as was Puritan theology of controlling for all time the developments of religion. But they die hard, these tenacious New England ideas; for the reason that they die, as a rule, not by assimilation, but by demolition. They sprang up in minds accustomed to a theology of infallible and predestined certainty, and prone to bring beneath the iron sway of that certainty even matters so extra-theological as social theories and political principles. This was natural after all. For, given a fixed dogmatic theology, and it is but a step to a dogmatic history, a dogmatic philosophy, a dogmatic sociology, these latter partaking of the desperate positiveness of the first. And once the dogmatic habit of mind is formed, the watch-word and battle-cry is: "No surrender!" The thorough-going, consistent dogmatist is not a man to be convinced by reasoning or persuaded by the quieter argument of historic progress. He must in his day and hour, be crushed flat by the iron heel of history lest he for-

ever obstruct the march of wayfaring mankind, in whose blood are discontent for certainties and boundaries, and a fever for the adventure of the untried and the new.

One of the prejudices thus held defiantly and with semi-Calvinistic rigor in many Puritanically-tempered minds was this, that the United States was predestined to be the nurturing-ground only of such sons of men as were born upon its soil; that no foreigners should be admitted into the pale, save those whom our strict domestic necessities would allow to dribble through our fast-locked gates; and that if our country had in any sense a world-mission it was to be achieved by displaying our liberties to the gaze of the older nations which might look on only from the safe distance of three thousand miles. But that we should admit aliens upon our stage in tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, and finally millions, teach them the proper accent and gesture of American freedom, and in a trice entrust them with important parts in the vast drama of the free and sovereign United States—"Never," said the man of dogmatic political economy; "Never," he kept on saying, while the fact thus authoritatively negated was assuming ever greater proportions; "Never," some one or other of his class will continue to repeat until dogmatics of every sort are dead.

This inheritance of consecrated mental inflexibility was the most notable possession of Amos Wakefield, the only man in Axton honored with


the title of Squire. Not bothering his head with theology to any serious extent, he poured the whole contents of his dogmatism into the narrow channel of his intransigent ideas of politics and the social order. This made the current of his prejudices too swift to be checked or diverted by quiet argument or by the stern actuality of history taking place before his eyes. "No admission of foreigners into the political privileges of this country!" was his creed — a creed which he held with boundless faith, but with little hope and less charity. America, in his view, was to show forth to less favored nations the sight, but withhold from them the taste of liberty, as one might impress upon the mind of a hungry youngster how goodly a thing a ripe apple is by holding it before him, expatiating upon its fragrance, taste, and juiciness, but forbidding him to grasp it with his own hands, and thrust it between his teeth. In thus thinking, Mr. Wakefield never doubted that he was in perfect harmony with Divine Providence and the Creator's will. What cared he then for the specious arguments or the vain enthusiasms of miserable men who had lost or never known the ancient spirit of the Puritans? Nay more, what cared he for the criminal policy of his country in calling across the Atlantic to the brain and brawn of Europe, and in bestowing citizenship upon them when they came? This indeed affected his feelings and his temper; but change in his principles and antipathies it made none. If the vile

offscourings of other nations were admitted, let them stew in their own abominations. Teach them? mingle with them? attempt to make good Americans of them? "Rubbish!" snapped Mr. Wakefield. "Can you make a balloon out of a bubble? An equal miracle it were to put old-time Americanism into Irish, Italians and Poles!"

In support of his principles, it must be confessed, he had not far to go for argument. For among the foreign workingmen who had swarmed into Axton when the building of the car-shops startled that dear old village out of two and a half centuries of tranquillity, there were several of vile character, and many more of absolutely murderous ideas as to the nature of social order and civil authority. Of this evil and dangerous minority — for the greater part of the new population were simple, thrifty, and law-abiding — one Murdock, a downright anarchist, had made himself the leader. Murdock was not without education, was a clever demagogue, and skilful proselyter. For several months previous to the opening of our story he had been holding workingmen's meetings on Sunday, at which violent harangues were made, as host Cuttle had informed his clerical guest, against the iniquity of property, and now and then against the folly and tyranny of even more sacred institutions. Not all these mob-orations, however, were of Murdock's delivering. He had as fellow-propagandists, two or three foreigners as glib of tongue and revolutionary of principle

as himself, who addressed their countrymen in their own idiom, and, under Murdock's direction, had so great a success with them as to give the old inhabitants of Axton plainly to understand that a real peril smouldered in the village which might at any moment blaze forth into actual disaster.

While Squire Wakefield raged and devised vain things against this condition of affairs, the Reverend Josiah Danforth, minister of the Axton Unitarian Society, set himself vigorously to work to overcome the evil. A few weeks before his speech at the town-meeting in opposition to Mr. Wakefield, he had established a settlement-house among the foreigners, in which evening classes were held and opportunities for innocent recreation were afforded free of expense to all who might care to make use of them. Mr. Danforth moreover, exerted himself to gain the confidence of these people by interesting himself in their troubles and ambitions; by interceding for them on occasion with the superintendent of the shops; in a word, by lending himself to all that disinterested and earnest zeal could suggest in their behalf. Finally he took a step over which he hesitated long and at last ventured on with some misgiving. Seeing his foreign friends destitute of all religious ministrations, by reason of which destitution as he thought, Murdock's Sunday meetings were so well attended, he had abandoned the Sunday evening service in his own church, and gave his Sabbath night to public worship in his own



settlement-house. It was the simplest of services. Prayer, New Testament reading, and a brief address on right living — the whole not going beyond a half hour — and that was all.

Mr. Danforth's scruple in undertaking this venture arose from his inborn horror and hatred of proselytism. He knew that his settlement-house congregation were as far removed from Unitarianism as they could possibly be; and he dreaded lest he be thought a wily subverter of their traditional faith. Repeatedly he told them that he cared nothing what their belief was, so that it was honest belief; urged them to remain faithful to the church they thought best; and did his utmost to drive into their heads the notion, hitherto utterly incomprehensible to them, that men could be fraternally united in spiritual aspiration while hopelessly separated in systems of theology. Whether they grasped this distinction or not, they understood that Danforth was their true and self-sacrificing friend. Soon their shyness and suspicion gave way, and they approached him with considerable cordiality. His classes were well attended, and his religious meetings brought enough together to satisfy his mind that they were worth continuing.

But all this only added fuel to the fire of Squire Wakefield's prejudices, the last thing in the world that the fire aforesaid stood in need of. The idea of his own pastor going over to the foreign invader — why, it was treason! "Treason, Sir,"

cried Mr. Wakefield to each male member of the Axton congregation. "It is the desertion of Jehovah's altar by Jehovah's consecrated prophet for the foul idolatries of the Canaanites. It is apostasy from the pure faith of our Puritan fathers."

These were Mr. Wakefield's expressions in the beginning of Mr. Danforth's apostolate. But when the minister informed his congregation that he felt called in conscience to hold Sunday night services for the foreigners, thereby of necessity abandoning evening worship in his own church, Mr. Wakefield's wrath was too sublime for words. The first shock over, he called upon the trustees of the church to inquire if they did not think the time had come to discharge their unfaithful servant. Some of them sympathized with the Squire's opposition to this late project of their pastor, but were reluctant to proceed to radical measures. Mr. Danforth, with all his foolish enthusiasms, they said, was too valuable a man to lose. His sermons breathed the finest spirit of the Gospel, and his spotless life was still more eloquent than the utterances of his lips. Let him be warned, they suggested, but not deposed. Two or three, however, of the trustees, vigorously upheld the minister, protesting that he was doing a sacred duty too long neglected, in seeking souls that had no shepherd; and flatly declared that they would oppose any action that would imply censure of so noble and zealous a man,

So the matter was dropped for the time being. But Mr. Wakefield's determination to get rid of the minister was not to be shaken. He seized every opportunity of undermining his popularity; he could listen in patience to no good reports of him; he watched his every step if haply he might discover some imprudence or neglect of duty. The Squire had declared war, and his method of waging war was not Saul's whose slender mercy spared Agag, but Samuel's, who hacked that last wretched survivor to pieces "before the Lord in Gilgal."

Two incidents occurred in Wakefield's household which were not of a character to mitigate his fury. The first of these was that his son and only child, Richard Wakefield, a young man of twenty-three, had left home after interminable disagreement with his father, and had gone to work at the new shops, where, so rumor had it, he had become not only intimate with several of the leaders of the workingmen, but a friend and supporter of Murdock. Although this latter point was not a certainty in the public mind, the mere fact of its being spoken of as a probability drove the Squire to an act of characteristic asperity. He tore up his will which bequeathed all his property to his son, and wrote another in which young Richard was totally disinherited.

The other matter was concerned with Dorothy Wakefield, the Squire's niece, who had lived with him since the death of her father, two years before. Dorothy was twenty-one, possessed a comfortable

income from her father's estate, and was consequently in no way beholden to her uncle. Still she consulted him dutifully in her own affairs, did her best to bring a little gentle pleasure into his harsh life, and bore meekly his infirmities of temper. Dorothy had been raised in the strict and religious discipline of an old-time New England home. Her father, the Squire's brother, was a man who joined to a singularly religious disposition, whereof the inflexibility of its moral principles and the tender benevolence of its charity were equally conspicuous, a cultivation of mind which would not have been discreditable to a scholar by profession. Two lessons he impressed upon his daughter's mind — with what success we shall see — how sacred is duty, and how holy is service. Often indeed he spoke to her of the Puritan traditions of which he was justly proud; but oftener still he reminded her that the best proof of noble ancestry is not contained in tables of genealogy, but in doing one's utmost for the present benefit of the world. Utterly devoid of the feelings of false aristocracy, and convinced that in a democratic society a man's duty is to mingle with the common lot and share the common life, he sent Dorothy to the public schools of Axton, and rejoiced to see her romping home surrounded by a group of playmates of all sorts and conditions, who would carry on their games upon his lawn or gather in the music-room of his house for dancing and singing to their hearts' content.

Mr. Danforth came to Axton only a few months before Mr. Wakefield's death; but brief as was the acquaintance of the two men, it was long enough to bind them together in devoted friendship. The young minister's fine scholarship and earnest zeal won him instant welcome to Mr. Wakefield's heart and home. "There is a man," he said more than once to Dorothy after Danforth had left of an evening, "who is what a son of the Puritans ought to be. From the past he has received an inheritance of nobility, but he is proving that he is no idle legatee of a worthy name. He is achieving his own nobility by so splendidly living for the present and the future. My little girl must be in her sphere what our young pastor is in his."

It was natural then that Dorothy and the minister should be drawn closely together. The girl's veneration for his character and talents was given the warmer touch of sisterly affection by her father's regard for him; and so it came to pass that Dorothy, especially after Mr. Wakefield's death, was a frequent visitor at the rectory where Danforth lived with his mother. Natural, likewise, was it that when the minister began his work among the workingmen, Dorothy should become his enthusiastic ally. Despite the pleadings and reproaches of her uncle — to which she invariably gave answer that she knew her father would approve her if he were living — she undertook settlement-work, teaching a class of Italians

in the evening, and visiting the laborers' houses whenever she felt that she could be of service.

Thereby she became the second of the Squire's domestic afflictions. Of course she was sorry to disregard her uncle's wishes; but she had learned from a better man lessons as to the meaning of her life which convinced her that this transgression was a duty. After the first few stormy days, in which she was forced to listen to such phrases as "apostasy from Puritan traditions;" "dishonor to the name of Wakefield;" "unaccountable mania to forget your station in society;" and many others of similar import, the subject was dropped between them, and gradually their former friendly relations were, in great part, restored. But an outbreak of the Squire's ill-controlled temper was always imminent, and on the morning after the town-meeting it occurred.

IV

Mr. Wakefield slept but little that night of his public humiliation. Stung to the quick of his irascible nature, he nursed his injury in the solitude of his chamber until it was in a state of angry inflammation. Probably during even his brief and troubled sleep, as was certainly the case during the long hours that he kept awake, his lips ceased not to utter vituperation of Mr. Danforth and heartfelt wishes for his deep damnation. "I'll get even with that cub of a preacher!" was his greeting to the clear, cold morning; and a wild roar to the servant for his hot water, his salutation to the household. Entering the breakfast-room, he paid no attention to the "Good morning" of Dorothy, who was waiting for him there. He went through his meal in silence, pushed back his chair, and thus began his well-premeditated attack.

"That confounded minister whom you are so devoted to, insulted me publicly last night."

The color vanished from Dorothy's face, and her voice shook as she answered: "I hope, Uncle, it was nothing serious."

"Nothing serious?" barked the Squire; "I tell you, when Amos Wakefield is attacked and humiliated before an Axton town-meeting, it is very serious. Danforth, confound him! told me in the presence of my fellow-townsmen that I had no patriotism, and plainly implied that I was a fool. And why? Because I respect my name and line-

age, refuse to rub elbows with the scum of Europe, and will not worship the Pope of Rome."

"Why, how did the Pope come into it?" asked Dorothy, once more in perfect control of herself.

"A Roman priest is coming here to carry on his superstitious services among the rabble," said the Squire; "and as a Wakefield, jealous of the fair name of this village, I protested against such an infamy, and besought the citizens not to harbor him or furnish him with facilities for establishing a Romanist community here. I talked straight from the shoulder; and I know the men present were impressed. Then this preacher of yours got up and insulted me, winding up with a lot of rubbish nonsense about the flag and our country, which of course turned all the idiots in the hall against me."

"Why, Uncle —" began Dorothy.

"Now look here, Dorothy," interrupted the Squire, rising from his chair; "I am not going to listen to your apologies for Danforth, or possibly to a speech in which you will inform me that it is wicked to hate Rome. I am in no mood now to endure that sort of thing. What I want to know is, Are you going to continue in your intimate co-operation with an upstart who has publicly insulted the head of your family, and the nearest kinsman you have living? Is it not clear to you that your family honor requires you to cut loose from him and from all his works and pomps? Am I nothing to you, and is Danforth everything?"

"You must know, Uncle, that it is for no personal reason that I assist Mr. Danforth's settlement-work. It is for the sake of the good that I can do. It is because I wish to live a somewhat higher life than one of indolence and vanity."

"Let that pass," replied the Squire; "Go on eating macaroni with Italians if you like —"

It was now Dorothy's turn to interrupt. Rising from the table and taking a step toward the door, she said:

"Uncle Amos, I cannot continue a conversation with you, in which you so far forget the respect that is due to yourself and to me. Certainly I should resent any unjust attack made upon you by Mr. Danforth or anybody else. When I learn the details of the unfortunate incident, I shall do what I think proper in the matter," and with this the door closed behind her.

Her uncle was after her in an instant. Taking her by the hand, he said: "Dorothy, forgive me if I have been rude. I am overwrought, I suppose. But you must come back and finish this discussion. I have much more to say to you." To this persuasion Dorothy yielded, and she took the seat she had just left.

"Dorothy," began Mr. Wakefield, "I have a duty towards you, although you are, in great measure, independent of me; and this duty now calls for plain speaking. You visit Danforth's house a great deal."

"That cannot be a new discovery," answered

the girl. "I have been visiting Mr. Danforth and his mother since before my father's death."

"But times and persons change," responded Wakefield, with some abruptness. "Will you please tell me if it is from Danforth's that you come on these frequent occasions of late when you reach home at ten o'clock and after? I refer to the nights which are not devoted to your settlement work, as you call it."

"Yes," responded Dorothy calmly, "it is."

"Do you think it becoming," asked her uncle, "to call so often and stay so late at the house of an unmarried man?"

"Uncle," replied Dorothy, "I resent the horrible imputation of your question, since whatever your sense of duty toward me, you should have first sought for a reasonable justification of my conduct. You have made suspicion your first conclusion; whereas I think I deserve that it should be your last. In these evening visits I see Mr. Danforth scarcely at all as a rule. He is either out or engaged in his study, and practically all my time is spent with his mother. Besides this explanation, there is another which I would prefer not to give unless you call for it."

"I do call for it," said the Squire.

"Very well," continued the girl, with a trace of hesitancy in her voice; "I remain later at the rectory than I otherwise should, because Mr. Danforth and his mother usually have evening prayer and meditation at half-past nine, and I

like to join them as often as I can, for it gives me help and inspiration that I sorely need."

If any subtle reproach lay beneath these last words, her uncle failed to see it; for he only looked up at the ceiling and sent forth a long whistle, evidently an expression of astonishment too profound for words.

"So that's it, is it?" he remarked, more to himself than to her. "The Pharisees were great fellows for prayer, I believe.

"Dorothy," he said, turning suddenly toward his niece; "Danforth is playing on your woman's sentiment and feeling. He wants to marry you; and in my soul I am convinced that it is your money he is looking for."

"Your suspicions this morning are as baseless as they are numerous," replied Dorothy. "The farthest thought from Mr. Danforth's mind is that of making love to me or to anyone else. You do not know him at all. He is absolutely absorbed in his work and study. And while I believe that the woman who would become his wife would be favored of Heaven, for he is a prince among men, I doubt whether such a woman lives. And now, you must excuse me."

Once more Mr. Wakefield was alone; and for a long time he remained so, his head bowed upon his breast, digesting his anger as best he could.

V

Father Hanlon was a procrastinator by nature; and it was only after two days had elapsed from his arrival in Axton that he set out to call upon the minister to thank him for his speech at the town meeting. In those two days he had acquired and heard much concerning Mr. Danforth. In the first place, he learned that this gentleman was a Unitarian. Hanlon's heart fell when he received this information. He had a horror of Unitarianism. Like nearly all Catholics and a large number of orthodox evangelicals, he held the Unitarians could not be Christians, none deserving that name save those who believed the traditional dogma of the Incarnation. To belong to a religion whose sole end and essence was to attack and destroy Christ — for so the priest understood the Unitarian form of faith — was a disastrous misfortune, an awful sacrilege. Half in pity, half in fear, Father Hanlon, as he strode through the snow on this memorable night of his interview with his benefactor, whispered a prayer that the good man who had spoken so valiantly for the church, might be led to see the fundamental truth of the Christian Gospel. Perhaps — his step quickened as the great hope flashed upon his mind — perhaps he, Ambrose Hanlon, would bring this about; perhaps this was the very purpose of Providence in sending him to Axton. "*Adveniat regnum tuum, fiat voluntas tua!*" he murmured, lifting his pale face to the stars.

Another report of the minister had reached Father Hanlon. Mr. Danforth had been holding religious services among the laborers, of whom the majority were Italians, and consequently Catholics. This was disquieting. He should be obliged to call Danforth's attention to the matter, and he feared a quarrel in consequence. The thing must be stopped; that was plain. But would Danforth be liberal enough to see the Catholic point of view?

Thinking of these matters, Hanlon ascended the steps of the rectory and touched the bell. His first visit to a Protestant minister's house, and that minister a Unitarian! As he heard the bell ring inside a strange feeling of revulsion came over him. It was too bad that he had been obliged to come. He was horribly out of place. Think of a Catholic priest beneath the roof of a cold, rationalistic unbeliever! But he would cut the visit very short. And if Danforth, in the courteous manner common to these Unitarian ministers, as rumor has it, subtly attacked the Church, he would find that the pastor of the Axton Catholics had courage and science enough to disconcert him. "By the way, what were those proofs of Christ's Divinity we got in Rome?" The servant took his card while he was recollecting them, and returned in a moment to request the visitor to step upstairs into Mr. Danforth's study, where the minister, just then detained, would join him in five minutes. This was cordial, and Ambrose felt a little less

agitated as he stepped across the threshold of Mr. Danforth's sanctum.

"Mr. Danforth," suggested the maid, "says that you may like to look over his books while you are waiting."

Father Hanlon did not at once notice the book shelves, though they covered three sides of the large room from floor to ceiling, while books to the number of perhaps a hundred, lay in orderly piles on the floor. His eyes were drawn to another object, the last in the world he expected to see in a Unitarian house. This was an ivory crucifix hung against a mat of black velvet above Danforth's desk.

"What in the world," was the visitor's almost audible exclamation, "is he doing with that? Surely Unitarians have no spiritual life, but only a frozen code of cultured behavior,—and what relation can there be between that sort of thing and this symbol of the saints?"

The crucifix was the sole decoration of the room, except an engraving of Rembrandt's "St. Paul." Father Hanlon stood looking at the sacred sign, his astonishment growing every moment. "Can it be that the man really believes in Christ?" his musing went on. "Is he one of those ministers of whom the number doubtless is large, who are secretly convinced of the Church's truth?" With a prayer once more rising to his lips, he turned to the laden shelves.

We have said that Ambrose was a student by

instinct. Now as his eye ranged along that fine array of volumes, the old, eager love of scholarship dominated him. With earnest face and eyes shining with a new light, he threw his glance from shelf to shelf, from book to book, hungry for knowledge, aflame with the scholar's sacred desire to know, to know. Here was a section given up to philosophy, the thinkers of ancient Greece standing close to the minds of modern Germany, England and France. Hanlon knew his Aquinas, and felt no doubt that the Angelic Doctor was the greatest of philosophers, compared with whom the "moderns"—the "*isti moderni*" of his sneering seminary syllogism were but blundering pygmies. Still, as he gazed upon the *oeuvres complètes* of the great French speculators, and the *gesammelte Werke* of the German critical school, he realized that he ought to know these men, and an uneasy sense came over him of the insufficiency of sneering syllogisms as an introduction to Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and their school.

Here, too, was Literature, embracing the masterpieces of five languages, the classic tongues, German, French and English. Hanlon had forgotten his Greek, and was innocent of German, and it was with a sigh that he contemplated treasures at present beyond his reach. History next! and the priest wondered how Danforth could have afforded so lordly a collection. "Religion!" was the printed card over the neighboring alcove, and Father Hanlon fairly flung himself upon the books

beneath it. Here were the German critics whom he was cherishing the desire of refuting, those indefatigable searchers into the Old Testament and the New, against whom Bishop Shyrne and the seminary professors had shot so many shafts. How voluminous they were, with their endless tomes of "Handkommentaren," "Einleitungen," and "Erklärungen." "I'll begin German this very night," whispered Hanlon in an ecstasy of expectation. But what books are these? Catholic theology and Catholic devotion! In Heaven's name, what sort of man was this Unitarian minister? Here were the thick quartos of St. Thomas' Summa; near by a numerous set of Papal bulls and decrees; and filling two shelves, were John of the Cross, Tauler, Ruysbroek, à Kempis and other doctors of Catholic mysticism. In a maze of astonishment, the priest turned again to the German critics, and took from its place a volume of the Bishop's great foeman, Harnack. He turned the pages, unintelligible to him as they were, with a strange feeling of mental enlargement, as though the sight and contact of so much learning had already given him a scholar's patent of nobility. While he still held the book, Danforth entered the room.

"My dear Father Hanlon, this visit does me honor. I thank you for it, and cordially welcome you to my house and to Axton. I had heard of your arrival, and was anxious to meet you. I am sure we shall be the best of friends."

The minister reinforced these warmly-spoken



words with a manly grip of the hand, and a look of friendliness which won Father Hanlon on the instant. The priest expressed his gratitude in the lower tone and less vigorous manner which were natural to him, and Danforth said:

"Let's have a smoke. I have a famous cigar here which I keep only for the elect."

Father Hanlon did not smoke.

"Too bad," laughed Danforth; "but you will not object if I indulge this bit of sensuality." Seating himself upon his revolving desk-chair and blowing a fragrant cloud from his lips with a fervent "Ah" of gratification, the minister went on:

"I see you have been looking into Harnack. What a glorious scholar he is! He has a good deal of religion in him, too. I hate a critic who is without reverence. I must confess I take a more radical view than Harnack of the Lucan authorship. I prefer Holtzmann on that point. I presume you are inclined to the traditional view?"

"The presumption is probably correct," answered Hanlon; "but I am not familiar with Harnack's views on the matter."

"He aims at proving," explained Danforth, "largely on a study of style, that the third Gospel and the We-sections of Acts were written by one and the same man, Luke namely. Did you ever happen to draw up a comparative table of the Greek vocabulary of the third Gospel and the We-sections?"

"No," the priest responded, wondering what in

the world "We-sections" were; "I have not yet done any work of that kind."

"That volume of the *Dogmengeschichte* in your hand is the one in which Harnack discusses the origins of Gnosticism," said Danforth. "I wish he had employed the *religionsgeschichtliche Methode* somewhat more adequately on that intensely interesting point. I am inclined to regard Gnosticism as a vast reservoir of ancient ethnic mysticism. Anz has tried to carry back Gnosticism's origins even to Babylonia, and I think he is on the right track. By the way, have you read Harnack's '*Reden und Aufsätze*'?"

Pedantic as all this appears, there was absolutely no trace of affectation in the young minister's manner. These studies were evidently his delight, and he ran on with the technicalities of them, thinking that the guest whom he had surprised with Harnack in his hand, was as familiar with them as himself.

"I am afraid that I have unconsciously led you into a false impression," said Father Hanlon, with a frank smile, which did not, however, dispel certain indications of embarrassment. "I cannot read German; but if our acquaintance shall by good fortune be long enough, I hope to discuss this literature with you some day, for I intend to begin learning the language at once."

"Admirable!" exclaimed Danforth. "It's horribly hard, German is, at least I found it so; but I know you will soon master it, and remember, all

my books are at your disposal. Take any of them you wish, and keep them as long as you please."

"I will not forget so much kindness," was the priest's cordial acknowledgment.

"There is one scholar in your Church," said Danforth, "whom I admire from my heart, and that is the Abbé Loisy. I hope you share my feeling for that splendid student?"

"I regret that I cannot think favorably of Loisy," answered the priest. "He is recklessly attacking the doctrines of the Church, and I must say that I cannot tolerate such men."

"Dear me! that is too bad," said the minister, a look of distress coming into his face. "Surely you are too hard on him in saying that he is reckless in his studies."

"I think he is reckless," persisted Hanlon, "for he has been repeatedly censured and warned by the highest authorities in the Church. His disobedience is wilful and stubborn."

"But do look at it in another way," argued Danforth, turning his candid eyes earnestly upon the other man. "Consider this lonely student living in laborious solitude, his heart pure, his conduct irreproachable, seeking truth, spending himself for truth, persecuted for truth. Do you forget his sufferings? Do you think it is for a whim that he incurs disgrace and anathema? Why, every feature of that great priest's life is simply glorious. I revere the man."

"He ought to submit his personal views to the

command of authority," was Hanlon's reply, given in a decisive tone.

"But truth cannot thus be fastened upon us like a bridle on a horse. Truth reaches us by way of reason and conscience, and until reason and conscience approve a thing as true, no human dictate can possibly drive it into a free intelligence. Personality, Father Hanlon, is the divinity within us. Personality is life. Personality is the soul. To crush that is to commit the most horrible of murders. I cannot contain myself when I see God's infinitely precious gifts thrust into shackles by courts, curias or kings. Why, the tears of indignation burn my eyes to this day, when I think of seventy-year-old Galileo standing up before the Roman Inquisition and forced to speak a lie against his own intelligence; or when I see pure and profound scholars in the Protestant church — men like Robertson Smith — driven from their posts of teaching by ignorant and despotic bigots. I became a Unitarian because I felt that in that fellowship, whatever the faults of Unitarianism, and they are many, the greatest thing was held to be personality freely growing towards its God."

Danforth spoke these words leaning forward in his chair, and his wonderful voice rang with passionate sincerity.

"But, dear Father Hanlon," he continued, as after a moment's pause, the priest remained silent; "we shall study together. Yes, and since we are

Christ's ministers, we shall pray together. God guide us both! Tell me how you like Axton."

"That brings me to the main purpose of my visit," said Hanlon, far from being perfectly at ease. "I came to thank you for your noble words at Tuesday's town-meeting. You did me and my people a service, a great service, and with all my heart I thank you. I was present, though unrecognized, and so know the full extent of your magnanimous action."

"Were you really there?" laughed Danforth. "What a pity Mr. Wakefield is so narrow. His brother was the noblest of men. You know old Amos is after me too,"—the minister had dropped back into his boyish manner—"but I don't care. I'm doing my duty in my own way, and it will take more than this honorable Squire to stop me from doing it. You see it's the old trouble between the conservative and the liberal"—Hanlon did not miss the laugh in Danforth's eye—"I've been trying to do a little work out of traditional boundaries, and the Squire is manœuvring to fix the bit in my mouth."

"You are meeting the usual fate of innovators," said Father Hanlon with more geniality than he had yet shown.

Danforth laughed. "I wonder," he said, "what sort of imbecile asylum this world would be but for innovators. Even yet we are far from adequately appreciating them. Do you know, I think civilization will continue to be semi-barbaric until

the word 'apostate' ceases to be a term of disgrace and becomes a word of honor."

"That is startling!" exclaimed the priest.

"But is it not true?" pursued Danforth. "Why, the word ought to be glorified if only because that man has lived"—and he pointed to the "St. Paul." "'Apostate' was hissed into his ear from synagogue and street, by bigots who knew not that Saul of Tarsus was to be the patron-saint of apostates for conscience' sake forever. Yes, and a greater than Paul was an apostate." Danforth's voice sank low, as though he were meditating with himself. "Jesus was an apostate. And ignorant authority, brutal, hierarchic, conservatism killed Him for His apostasy, His magnificent, His divine apostasy!"

Both men were silent. Danforth's eyes looked towards the floor; Hanlon's, wide opened, were fixed on Danforth. The thoughts of each were profound indeed.

A bell rang in the room, and Father Hanlon rose, apologizing for his long stay. The minister assured him that his visit was all too short. "That is my mother's ring," he added. "She was not aware that I had company, and in case I am not engaged, she summons me at this hour every night for evening prayer and meditation."

It cost the priest an effort to conceal his astonishment.

Danforth looked searchingly at the priest, and continued: "Since you are a clergyman you would

be very welcome to our little devotional circle. My mother and I, and sometimes Miss Wakefield, are all that are present. I would like to have you join us, and my mother would be pleased. But your theology forbids praying with heretics, and I wish you would not feel the least constraint. 'Nulla communicatio cum haereticis in divinis' is the Catholic axiom in the matter, isn't it?"

Who can account for those strange sub-conscious forces which at times fling suddenly into our brains and upon our lips, judgments and resolutions so foreign to our ordinary thought and temper, that afterwards we marvel that we have formed them? In some inexplicable impulse of this sort, Father Hanlon said: "Your invitation is an honor; I will attend your devotions with sincere pleasure."

They went downstairs together, the priest's mind in such a tumult that he took no notice of the radiant pleasure that beamed on the face of his host; and understanding out of Danforth's rapid utterance only a few words to the effect that his mother was a Quaker, and that meditative devotions were so dear to her. It was the sight of Mrs. Danforth's face which recalled him to wide-awake consciousness. Hanlon had never seen such spiritual beauty on a human countenance. Mrs. Danforth was midway between sixty and seventy; her hair was of glistening white; old age had left its usual traces upon her brow; but her features were glorified with a peace and purity that seemed to

glow with the light of another world. Father Hanlon held her hand and gazed at her, saying no word to her first greeting, able for the moment only to contemplate that wonderful face, whose loveliness he knew could come only from within and from above.

"Father Hanlon is going to be a dear friend of ours, mother," said her son.

"I welcome thee, friend," said Mrs. Danforth, looking full into Hanlon's eyes, whereat the priest understood where Danforth had got the striking candor of his gaze. The sweet voice went on: "It is a happy promise for our friendship that we first greet thee at this moment of our communion with the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus cometh with thee, friend, for we two or three are about to come together in His name, and He will be in the midst of us."

Now for the first time Father Hanlon noticed a tall young woman, who came forward with extended hand and a winning smile upon her beautiful face, as Danforth made the necessary introduction to Miss Dorothy Wakefield.

"It is a pleasure indeed to meet you, Father Hanlon," she said. "I hope that we shall see much of you. Your coming is a great gain to Axton."

Two or three minutes of conversation followed, and then Mrs. Danforth walked to a table in the middle of the room whereon lay an open Bible, before which she knelt. Dorothy knelt at her left,

her son at her right, and Father Hanlon was next to him. The priest's conscience smote him sorely. "*Nulla communicatio cum haereticis in divinis*," ("No joining in worship with heretics") one of the fundamental laws of his church, kept throbbing within his brain. The palliatives that he administered to his guilty soul were that he would silently say Catholic prayers while the others were at their heretical devotions; that he should never be found here again; and that at the worst, his coming into this forbidden circle was an act of impulse, not deliberation.

The voice of the old Quakeress fell upon his ears: "Thus shall you pray": Hanlon lifted his face — and there was great tenderness in it — and looked at her, as with downcast eyes she coned the sacred page. After a moment's pause she went on, with a long interval after each word: "Our — Father — who — art — in — heaven." Here she stopped, her eyes closed, her clasped hands rested upon the book, her head inclined gently forward, until it was bowed low, and perfect silence fell upon the group. It was wonderful. Tears rushed into the young priest's eyes, and he too bowed his head. Five minutes — ten — fifteen — and still they meditated. As Father Hanlon for perhaps the twentieth time was thanking God for souls like these, and praying that they might be led to the truth of Catholicism, Mrs. Danforth placed the book before her son, who read with devout feeling the canticle of Simeon:

"Now lettest thou thy servant depart O Lord
According to thy word in peace.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all
peoples
A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of thy people Israel."

The book was passed to Miss Wakefield, who
read in a sweet, full voice:

"Make ye ready the way of the Lord;
Make his path straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
And every mountain and hill shall be brought low;
And the crooked shall become straight,
And the rough ways smooth
And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

When Dorothy finished, Mrs. Danforth said to
the priest: "Friend, wilt thou speak a word to
our spirit?"

Father Hanlon closed his eyes, and said, in a
voice of quiet earnestness:

"May the blessing of Almighty God our heavenly
Father, descend upon us and abide with us in the
spirit of Christ our Lord."

That night Ambrose Hanlon sat in his lonely
chamber till long after midnight, nearer to his
own soul, nearer to the heart of ultimate and eter-
nal Reality than ever in his life before.

VI

Mr. Danforth's settlement-house was a two-story frame building, standing in a row of similar edifices which had lately been put up for the accommodation of the laborers at the car-shops. It differed from the surrounding buildings only by being somewhat larger than most of them; by a flag-pole in front which flew the Stars and Stripes on patriotic holidays; and by the inscription "Fraternity House," painted above the entrance. By breaking down the partitions on the lower floor, a hall of fairly ample dimensions was formed, which served the three-fold purpose of reading-room, class-room, and general meeting place. Upstairs there were three class-rooms. The class work comprised principally American history and civics, English and arithmetic. Only boys and men followed the evening courses in these branches; but on one afternoon a week the girls and women of the neighborhood were invited to the house for helpful instruction in house-wifery and in English. Very few women responded; but the classes for boys and men were almost overcrowded. Mr. Danforth, Miss Wakefield, and a Miss Hamilton, daughter of one of the church trustees who had defended the minister against Squire Wakefield, were the hard-driven corps of teachers. Danforth taught history and civics, or as his own phrase had it, history and patriotism.

Let us look in upon this busy "Fraternity

House," the evening after the meeting of priest and minister. Dorothy is endeavoring to explain the sad mystery of some of our perfect tenses and past participles. "Do, did, done;" "go, went, gone;" "run, ran, run;" and other profundities of English grammar she is trying hard to fix in the mind and memory of her pupils. A strange, interesting group, these same pupils! There are twenty of them, ranging from fourteen years of age to thirty-five. Three are Jews, two are Poles; one is a bright-faced Irish lad; the rest are Italians. All are attentive. With earnest faces and hard-working brains, now and then with a wrinkling of foreheads, they are following their fair young teacher as she leads them a few steps nearer to Knowledge,—that Ideal which stirs the heart of the immigrant to America almost as soon as his eyes catch sight of the Statue of Liberty from the steerage. They revere Dorothy, these Americans-to-be, and are proud of being her pupils. At their daily work they often speak her name with affection, telling of this little incident and that which show her goodness of heart; how she bears with so-and-so, who is miraculously stupid; how tactfully she corrects their mistakes; how kind she was to visit some sick child the other day — but there would be no end of describing how they spoke of her. She was Saint Dorothy to them all. Had it ever happened that some coarse tongue had made base use of her name — well, there were great furnaces in the shops, with doors

ever open to fiery caverns within, and through these doors it were not impossible to thrust a full-grown man. It was not for her beautiful face that they loved her. This motive, strong as it might have been, was the least of all. Nor yet was it chiefly owing to her sympathy and patience. It was dominantly because she displayed before their eyes that quality which touches the ultimate elements of every human soul,—self-sacrifice, generous and unpurchased self-sacrifice for others' sakes. Shall we not say that these foreigners were favored of Providence in learning American liberty in this way of Consecration?

From desk to blackboard, from blackboard to desk goes Dorothy, illustrating the right and the wrong use of the English verb. All minds, as we have said, are intent upon the explanations. But one pair of eyes, particularly dark and brilliant, never leave the teacher's face. They barely glance at her written words and diagrams. They are for her, not for her chalk-lines on a board. The possessor of them is Dorothy's brightest pupil, Pasquale Ciasca. A year ago he came to America from Calabria, a youth of twenty-four. For now two months he has been attending the settlement-school. In another school too he is a pupil, one not so helpful to him — Murdock's gang of radicals. There also he is bright, and is learning fast. Keen, resolute, passionate, he is a man to whom it is more than ordinarily important which influence shall predominate — that of the Puritan girl or that of the revolutionary demagogue.

Dorothy, the preliminary explanations finished, tells the class to write five short sentences illustrating the forms of these troublesome verbs. This is no small task for many of her charges, and these duller unfortunates bend over their sheets of paper with more evidence of distress than if they were straining at a windlass to lift a thousand pounds of iron. As they write, Dorothy walks slowly down the aisles, now checking a blunder just as the pencil is about to perpetrate it; again dropping a word of praise for a difficulty successfully surmounted. When she reaches Pasquale's seat she finds that he alone has finished his five sentences. They are all correct.

"Good, Pasquale!" she says.

"I not good; you good," answers Pasquale.

Their eyes meet, the teacher's shining with approbation, the pupil's filled with something far deeper.

"You will make-a me good in the Engleesh?" whispers Pasquale, anxious to detain her.

Dorothy smiles again.

Catching her hand and drawing her nearer to him, he adds in a lower whisper that throbs with passion:

"Make-a me good in everathing."

"I will help you all I can," answers Dorothy, releasing herself and walking on with flushed face.

The class goes on with its elementary drudgery, nineteen poor heads wrestling with the dry but necessary intricacies of our English speech. The

twentieth head, careless now of mood and tense, is heated with the fires of a south-Italian heart. What dreams is it cherishing? Possibly what wild and vengeful purposes may it not be conceiving?

Toward the end of the hour, Mr. Danforth comes in to consult about something with Miss Wakefield. While they stand near together talking in low tones, Pasquale's face becomes not pleasant to look upon. The shadow of an angry scowl falls upon it, and the swarthy features darken with evil omen. Deep in his throat rumbles a litany of Calabrian curses. If Mr. Danforth is the cause of this change he had better look to himself. There is loose gunpowder in Pasquale's nature, and Murdock is teaching him to play with fire.

As the minister was leaving Dorothy at the Wakefield gate that night, the girl said in a voice that was not without traces of agitation: "Mr. Danforth, you have warned me before about Pasquale Ciasca; but I have laughed the matter away, not wishing to lose a bright pupil, especially as he is in such danger from his associates. Now, however, I must acknowledge that you understood him better than I. I shall make no further objection to your dismissing him."

Danforth answered that he felt greatly relieved that Miss Wakefield had come to this decision, and said that Pasquale had attended her class for the last time,

Five minutes later, as the minister was ascending the steps of his house, a large stone was hurled close to his head and crashed through the glass panel of the door. Danforth's lip curled in a grim, stern smile. "This is only the beginning," he said.

VII

Father Hanlon procured the town-hall for an indefinite period for his Sunday services, despite the indignant protest of Squire Wakefield. A temporary altar, easily set up and as easily removed, was put together upon the stage, and on the young pastor's first Sunday in Axton, he made official acquaintance with his congregation. Matt. Kiley had gone through the parish with the announcement of services, accompanied with eloquent praises of Father Hanlon's marvelous learning and "cleverness." "Cleverness" was Matt.'s supreme word, the last gasp of an exhausted vocabulary to express the combination of mighty genius and heroic sanctity. About a hundred people, including nearly a score of children, were present in response to the exhortations of the new sexton who was not inaptly named for an Apostle. Five in the congregation were Italians, all women. Well toward the front sat Miss Wakefield.

Father Hanlon's initial sermon was simple, winning, and impressive. His sympathetic nature and deep spirituality gave his words swift conveyance from ear to heart. Only as an afterthought had any of his hearers ever commented on the rhetorical features of his discourses. He spoke too straight to souls for that. On this morning he gave voice to thanksgiving to God in behalf of his people for the grace that had come

to Axton in the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass. He reminded the congregation that though they were a little flock and poor in earthly advantages, they belonged to the mighty church of history; the church which was already venerable with immemorial age when the sects that to-day dispute her claims were born. Of this great mother they must be proud. The whole world should be proud of her, since it owed to her civilization and learning as well as the knowledge of the Christian faith. But this debt modern men had forgotten, or knew not of, and therefore their contempt of her. Only for ignorance the world to-day would return to Catholicity; ignorance of her claims, her sanctity, her history. The priest closed by saying that in order to give his parishioners a better knowledge of their faith, he would begin on the following Sunday a course of sermons on the marks of Christ's true Church, and would show that these marks belong to Catholicism alone.

All this was spoken with no shadow of arrogance. Clearly Ambrose Hanlon's conviction was rooted in sincerity that his form of faith was necessary for the salvation of men, and that its intellectual basis was solid beyond peril. While he was reading the Post-communion after he had finished speaking, the thought flashed upon his mind that Josiah Danforth was not ignorant of Christian, and very probably of Catholic theology, and yet he was a Unitarian, the furthest possible distance from Catholicity. A moment's disturbance

came with the thought, but it soon passed away, and left Father Hanlon's soul in the peace and pride of undoubting faith. Danforth had not received "the gift of faith," that was all.

That evening Father Hanlon paid his first visit to Mary Kiley. Her father had not exaggerated her beauty. As she lay on her cot in the neat parlor of the little cottage, and smiled joyously as she took the young priest's hand, her face might have served well for the Madonna of resignation. Pure as snow was that face, its timid eyes brown and large; its sweet smile suggestive of both sanctity and pain.

"Dear Father," she said in a soft voice; "now let me say 'Nunc dimittis.' At last our divine faith will lift its head in Axton, and all men will see that it is beautiful."

"My dear child," said Father Hanlon, "I feel sure that this grace has been given to this village because of the merit of your virtue and suffering."

"Why, Father," protested Mary, and her great eyes looked very frightened, "what are you saying? If that thought entered my vain mind how should I be saved?"

"Forget it, then," answered the priest; "Go on with your holy prayer and holier pain. But the rest of us will have our thoughts."

"Dorothy was telling me she met you," said Mary.

Hanlon's face reddened, for the girl's tone and manner were slightly embarrassed as she spoke.

Evidently she knew of his indiscretion in a Unitarian minister's house; and that she was somewhat shocked he more than expected.

"Yes, I met Miss Wakefield in Mr. Danforth's house," said Hanlon. "I called there to thank him for his noble action at the town-meeting. As I was about to leave, he, his mother, and Miss Wakefield were going to start their evening devotions, and I joined them on Mr. Danforth's invitation. I did not want to appear uncivil, you know. I am afraid you are disedified."

"I did not know what to make of it when Dorothy told me," answered Mary; "but I understand it somewhat better now, I think. Dorothy and I love each other as sisters. We sometimes pray together, but I always read the prayers. But to let a minister lead me in devotional exercises — I should be afraid of that."

"I felt bad about it too," the priest acknowledged, "but circumstances practically forced me to it. Needless to say, I would not do it again. Mr. Danforth is an unusual sort of man."

"Very unusual," assented Mary, as anxious as her visitor to change the subject. "If only you could convert him, Father?"

"There is no promise of that at present," answered Hanlon. "By the way, what is Miss Wakefield's religion?"

"She is a Unitarian, and greatly devoted to Mr. Danforth," the girl responded. "But she is a glorious girl. Her religious nature is deep and earn-

est. She has often regretted to me that Unitarianism appeals so little to the richer and more ardent and emotional side of our spirit."

"Does she know anything of Catholicity?" asked the priest.

"Yes," answered Mary, "she knows everything about it so far as one outside can know it. We have gone over and over again the claims and doctrines of the Church. Dorothy sees the strong points of our faith, its logical scheme of belief, its power to produce saintly lives, its poetry and mysticism. Often she has envied me the possession of so venerable, beautiful, and sustaining a faith. But she says she cannot yield merely to her religious moods. Her intelligence must be satisfied; and thus far it is not satisfied. Besides, she has what I think is an undue love for modern times and the modern spirit; and she feels that the Church cannot in its present state lead the humanity of to-day. Do what you can for Dorothy, Father. She is a Protestant saint. If only she were in the house of God, how near to Christ and His Blessed Mother she would be!"

"I will do all in my power, according to my opportunities," said Father Hanlon. "But do you, Mary, pray and suffer for her."

"Yes, Father," answered Mary, "and I will pray and suffer for you."

The priest's heart was uplifted as he left her. He felt humble and joyful. With this dear child interceding for him, how could he fail?

VIII

To study, to know, was an ambition given a fresh stimulus in Ambrose Hanlon's breast through that interview with Mr. Danforth. He felt his incompetence in all positive and critical sciences. Speculation in the field of metaphysical theology he had cultivated; but the facts in the history of theology, the facts in church history, the facts in criticism, with these he was miserably unfamiliar. Now for the first time he perceived the enormous value of the science of facts. Not that he therefore despised the science of syllogisms or questioned its validity as systematized by Thomas of Aquin. But the whole modern world was abandoning the high region of speculation and was digging into the rugged soil of reality for facts. It had put these facts together; it had drawn its religion from them; it was using projectiles made from them to assail the fortress of the Church. This the conversation with Danforth had revealed to him. He saw that if he were to meet men like Danforth on their own ground all his knowledge about angels, and processions in the Trinity, would be useless. These men no longer understood that language. For the Church's sake he must master criticism and modern methods of research, and then show that these are not only not irreconcilable with the ancient dogmas, but support and prove them.

Over and above this, Danforth had humiliated him. He, a Roman Doctor, had been unable to carry on a learned conversation with a Unitarian minister on matters that the whole world of scholarship was thinking about. It was disgraceful, and he felt it keenly. For the first time in his life he uttered criticisms — to himself only — of his teachers. Why had they kept him in ignorance of positive theological erudition? Six years spent in studying theology, and he knew the tenets of Valentinian and Theodore of Mopsuestia, but not those of Harnack and Holtzmann! He could show that Boethius' definition of Person was not irreconcilable with the Incarnation, but was utterly in the dark while Danforth was talking about the "We-sections" of the Acts of the Apostles.

There would be an end to this condition of affairs, he sternly resolved. Confident of his ability, and foreseeing that he would have leisure in plenty, he reveled in the delightful anticipation of his studies. How glorious would be his long mornings and his solitary evenings with books, with the mind of the modern world! And in summer he would go into the woods with a learned volume, and beneath the trees or beside a laughing brook he would delve into modern wisdom, and find for himself what claim these critics have to the reverence of unbelievers. How kind, after all, was Providence in sending him to Axton!

His second call on Danforth, made for the purpose of borrowing books, was on the first evening

that he knew the minister would be at home. He was received with fraternal cordiality. Danforth liked him, that was evident.

"Mr. Danforth," said Hanlon, "I have come for some books. You have shown me that scholastic theology is not the sum and total of the learning that a man who is supposed to be scholarly should possess, and I'm going to begin a course of critical study. If you will take me as a pupil, I would wish no other man as teacher."

"Father Hanlon," was the minister's joyous response, "I am not only delighted but edified. It is Truth that has caught hold of you, my brother, and you are proving yourself her docile disciple. Poor amateur as I am in the great world of scholarship, I will do all I can to serve you."

"I want to understand biblical criticism," said Hanlon; "now give me a start."

Danforth settled farther back into his chair, and his face suddenly grew grave.

"Friend Ambrose," he began, after a long pause; "by the way, let's drop formalities. You are Ambrose to me, and I am Jo to you — Jo is short for Josiah. Well, then, let me suggest that you are about to enter on studies which may modify your religious views; which may, in fact, bring you face to face with a crisis."

Father Hanlon smiled. "I have no fears for my faith or my church," he said. "Both in my estimation are established in too solid a rock to be blown away by the winds of new doctrine."

Danforth bowed. "My advice then is," he suggested, "that before reading any critical work, you run through a small volume I have here on 'The Intellectual and Spiritual Dispositions of a Christian Student.' It is not a published work, but consists of three lectures delivered by an old teacher of mine at Cambridge. He was one of God's noblemen; and this book of his should be read I think, by everyone that sets his mind toward Truth."

The priest looked disappointed.

"The reason," continued Danforth, "why I recommend this little volume is this. The problem of Truth, the problem of criticism, the problem of religion, are not so much intellectual as ethical. What state of mind we bring to our studies is a vastly more important matter than the extent of our studies. Intellectual honor, intellectual chastity, as a great scholar of your church beautifully expressed it, is one of the rarest virtues in this world. Most of us are sophisticated by prepossessions. We are apt to study not to discover divine Truth, but to pile up supports for our selfish systems. Many a learned man who would not tell a verbal lie, is committing mental falsehood all day long. These lectures deal with this feature of study, and I am sure you will like them. You have studied the tract *De Mendacio* in your moral theology. If I am not mistaken, you will find here some valuable ideas on certain little-known subtleties of falsehood."

"I will read the book, since you so highly praise it," said Hanlon. "By the way, you seem to know a good deal about Catholic theology."

"I am not wholly unfamiliar with it," acknowledged Danforth. "I have been through most of St. Thomas; and I once informed myself upon your moral system by a fairly thorough reading of Alphonsus Liguori. But I know your mystical writers best of all. My inclination for this species of literature I inherited from my Quaker mother. The old Benedictine writers are magnificent. But — if you will pardon me — the Jesuits have ruined Catholic spirituality."

"The Jesuits!" exclaimed Hanlon; "what in the world can you mean?"

"The old monastic mystics," answered Danforth, "taught a glorious interior liberty, and pure spiritual prayer. The Jesuits externalized spirituality. With their exaggerated, and to my mind, immoral, insistence, on obedience, they check the growth of personality and prevent the free development of the individual soul. For the normal, natural inner liberty taught by the ancient mystics, they substitute grosser forms of devotion. They are the foremost advocates of devotion by arithmetic, novenas and the rest; and of devotion in forms of revolting materialism — Christ's physical heart, Mary's heart, and so on. There is no sublimity in their spiritual literature. The same tawdriness, stiffness, and vulgarity appear in their architecture; they ruined that also."

Father Hanlon, trained only in Jesuit methods, knew scarcely anything of Benedictine literature. Humiliated at his inability to meet this remarkable minister even upon Catholic subjects, he said nothing for a full minute of embarrassment. Then, conscious of how weak he was appearing, he ventured:

"I hope you admire the genius of St. Alphonsus. I think he is the St. Thomas of moral theology."

"No," answered Danforth; "I almost detest him. Dear Ambrose, you will excuse my candor; but without candor the world would be a sham. We understand each other now too well to be offended by sincere plain-speaking. No, I do not like Liguori. Why, if one followed his treatise on lying, one would become the meanest of tricksters. His theory of mental reservations is so awful an offense against truth as to appear to me almost sacrilegious. That he was an industrious compiler is true of course. But he is destitute of genius; and did not know what an unbiased mind means. Of how low an order of special pleading is his book on the papacy! Then he was abnormal all through. Do you think a man who lashed and tortured himself as Liguori did; who had so unwholesome an obsession about temptation; who was so diseased with scruples; do you think such a man could have been mentally balanced? You recall that in his advanced old age, when he was nearly ninety in fact, he dreaded going out upon

the street lest he see something that would excite sensuality. All this I say while heartily acknowledging his humility, piety and zeal."

Father Hanlon had read the works of Liguori, but only as writings to be blindly followed, not keenly criticized; and as for the features of his biography mentioned by Danforth, he was entirely unfamiliar with them. The hagiography permitted in the seminary contained no such disedifying incidents. He shifted the discussion therefore by saying:

"No Catholic may entertain such an opinion of St. Alphonsus. The Church has solemnly decided that he is in all things a safe moralist. No other moral author has received so high an encomium as Pius IX gives Alphonsus."

"But you cannot tolerate his theory of mental reservation?" questioned Danforth, with painful earnestness.

"Moral theology is not a code of highest conduct," answered the priest. "It lays down the minimum not the maximum of ethical integrity."

"True enough," said Danforth; "but the trouble with such teachings as those of Liguori on lying and with some of his opinions on theft, is this: they are not applied by the sinner but by the confessor, the very guardian of morals. He must give the penitent the benefit of them officially and sacramentally. Thus laxity is fixed and perpetuated in the very source of the Catholic moral law. If for example, I go out at night to burn down your

house, and by mistake I burn down your neighbor's, the confessor, according to Liguori, cannot bind me, scoundrel though I should be, to restitution. Isn't that abominable?"

"I must say," confessed Hanlon, "that this opinion you have just cited has always offended me."

"The great trouble with moral theologians," said Danforth, "is that they so often misplace the basis of morality. Instead of placing it in the inner character they place it in external law. Instead of listening to the simple dictate of unsophisticated conscience, they regard too much the subtleties of a flexible written code."

"Authority comes first with a Catholic," asserted Hanlon.

"External authority is an extremely dangerous thing," the minister responded. "If authority dispenses with the free examination of reason, and supersedes the enlightened exercise of the individual conscience, it is an awful thing, the worst possible obstacle to the progress of mankind."

"We stand at opposite poles," the priest said, smiling; "and the whole world is between us. I am for the submission of individuality to authority; you for the reverse."

"Toward which of our positions is the world moving?" Danforth asked.

"That is a question the answer to which would not affect me in the least," was the confidently spoken answer.

"Well," said Danforth; "as I told you the other night, personality is life to me. To suppress that personality is the chief of crimes."

"But free personality is full of vagaries and absurdities," objected the priest; "does it not need control? Is it not dangerous?"

"Dangerous?" repeated Danforth. "It certainly is. So is intellect; so is free-will; so is life. But the danger is the inevitable condition of progress. It will be corrected and averted by the essential soundness of human nature. The dangers of free personality look toward larger life. The dangers of excessive authority look toward stagnation and death."

"This has been a stimulating conversation," said the priest, rising. "I hope we shall have many such discussions."

"By all means we shall," assented the minister. "Only by exercise can either mind or muscles grow. Here is the volume I mentioned; and you may do well to take along with it these three books on the present state of Old Testament criticism and the development of Hebrew religion."

Mr. Cuttle noticed that his clerical guest as he entered the hotel that night, was very much preoccupied, hardly noticing the inn-keeper's salutation. In a few minutes Father Hanlon came down stairs, with two thick volumes in his hand.

"Mr. Cuttle," he said; "please do me the favor of putting these books in the furnace when you attend to your fire to-morrow morning. They are

of no use to anybody. You will do this for me?"

Nahum Cuttle made no answer, but looked with a sorely puzzled face, now at the priest, now at the devoted volumes.

"I swan, this beats me," he finally said.

"I suppose it looks queer," said Father Hanlon with a grim smile; "but as I told you, these books are worthless and are taking up room which I need for other purposes. They are simply lumber, and if they help your furnace fire, it is probably the best service they ever did. I assure you they are dry enough to burn well."

"Wall," continued Nahum at length; "I'm stumped if I ever see books pitched into the fire before; but as they belong to you it's none of my business, and I'll burn 'em if you say so."

The priest left the man when this point had been settled, and Nahum stood gazing at the two books left in his hand for a holocaust. Curiously he inspected every inch of the outside of them, spending some moments in a vain endeavor to decipher the title which was printed on a faded red band on the back, and at last he placed one volume between his knees, as in a vise, and cautiously opened the other. His baffled eyes beheld the following inscription in big black capitals on the title page:

VEN PATRIS FRANCISCI SUAREZII
E SOCIETATE JESU SACERDOTIS,
DE ANGELIS DEQUE ANGELICIS OPERATIONIBUS
TRACTATUS.
CUM PERMISSU SUPERIORUM ET REGIO APPROBATU
MDCCXII.

Hiram gazed at this legend a long time. Then very deliberately he closed the book, put both volumes under his arm, and with sundry headshakings slowly descended to the furnace room. Thus fell the mighty Suarez and his famous treatise on the Angels from the pedestal whereon Ambrose Hanlon, Roman doctor of divinity, had once placed them. As the ponderous pages curled and quivered, and fell to ashes in the flames, the priest, careless of their fate, was seated in his study, opening a book of introduction to higher criticism.

IX

One evening a week after the incidents of the last chapter, Dorothy Wakefield was sitting with Mrs. Danforth, preparing with skilful fingers certain decorations that were to be used in an Easter festival for the children.

"Josiah is more than usually preoccupied of late," Mrs. Danforth was saying. "He spends whole days in his study, and I see but little of him. I trust that he is not in trouble, Dorothy."

"I know of no reason for his worrying," the girl answered. "The dismissal of Pasquale Ciasca from the school was unpleasant; for the Italian was furiously angry when told to go. But I hope that nothing serious will come of it."

"My son has enemies," Mrs. Danforth said; "and I foresee much distress for the poor boy."

"But, Mother," protested Dorothy, who was accustomed to use that endearing address; "he does not care for that, and I am sure his beautiful devotion will win over those that now oppose him. His danger is not from others, but from himself. He will overwork if he is not checked by someone. He has absolutely no human interests except his work, his study — and —" there was wistfulness in Dorothy's voice — "and you."

"I wish he had a greater regard for the domestic side of life," agreed Mrs. Danforth. "He ought to marry. Every noble man should marry."

It is from the homes of such that the leaders of humanity must come."

Dorothy was silent, and as she bent over her work, the beautiful eyes of the old Quakeress rested upon her tenderly.

Before either spoke again, the door was flung open and Danforth stepped briskly into the room. He was in a state of joyous excitement; his eyes shone with enthusiasm, a faint glow had crept into his pale cheeks, his face was radiant with a smile of great happiness.

"Listen to me, women," he cried, striking a mock-heroic attitude, "while I a tale unfold, the greatest scheme that ever was on land or sea. I'm going to start a new national society. I, the obscure minister of this forlorn town of Axton, am going to take wing from my Massachusetts hamlet till I dip my pinions in the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico!"

His mother smiled. "A boy forever!" she murmured.

"So you have invented an airship," laughed Dorothy.

"I'm up in an airship just now," said Danforth, dropping into a chair, "and woe to the woman that tries to call me back to earth!"

"Once there was a man named Darius Green," his mother remarked.

"Mother, you are anathema!" cried her son. "Now tell me, are you prepared to go up in an airship with me, or are you going to keep on call-

ing me Darius Green? I've got a plan that prudence, caution, conservatism, and all earth-plodders will laugh at; but enthusiasm will jump into the basket, cut the ropes, and be off towards heaven in a jiffy. Which are you, earth-plodders? Then back I go to my study without another word. Airship travelers? Then will I speak."

"Speak on," commanded Dorothy; "to heaven of all places the pastor should be followed by his flock. We are with you among the stars."

"Good!" said Danforth. "Then here is my venture. As I understand the American Republic, it teaches mankind an absolutely new kind of patriotism. Patriotism as immemorially understood is simply the blind attachment of the animal to the herd, of the savage to his tribe, of the serf to his clan. There's nothing spiritual in it. It is a mixture of pride, cupidity, jealousy, revenge and aboriginal gregariousness. It represents a set of ideas that civilized men cannot possibly love, and cannot possibly die for, except under compulsion. That is point number one. Point number two is that our country and our flag have totally transformed the patriotic sentiment, have changed it from its very source and origin, and have lifted it into the region of the spirit, into the realm of religion. Our country, based upon the principle of the essential goodness of human nature, and existing for the purpose of developing free personality to the utmost, simply consecrates patriotism, makes it sacred and divine. Love of country

with us ought to be not the unreasoning loyalty of a dog to any kind of master, but the sublime devotion of ourselves to mankind, to liberty, to progress, to the immortal spirit of man. All these ideals are inseparable from America. America was born beneath their star. She committed herself to the magnificent venture of her democracy because of them. While she prospers they will prosper. If she dies they will sink into darkness until another America shall be born. Now for point number three. It follows from all this that only that man is a true and intelligent American patriot who cultivates the spiritual qualities of developed manhood which his country essentially represents. But the cultivation of spiritual qualities is necessarily religious. Let Americans understand that their patriotism is sacred and their religion patriotic, and what a glorious nation we should have! Do you follow me?"

"This is not an airship," answered Dorothy, "but an Elijah's chariot."

"A beautiful compliment, Dorothy, and I thank you for it," returned Danforth. "Well, why not do something," he continued, "to spread this consecrated idea of patriotism? There are alarming signs of national peril in the sky above us. Ideals are threatened. The eternal and spiritual side of life is menaced. We are forgetting our fathers' prayers and hopes. Can we not set this country on fire"—here Danforth rose from his chair and walked nervously up and down the room—"can

we not set this country on fire with patriotism, a new patriotism, a patriotism that knows how to pray, that will count violation of conscience as infidelity to country? Thinking of these things I have determined to do what I can towards so holy an end. As a beginning I am going to found a society called the League of Conscience and Country. Its purpose will be to inculcate this higher patriotism; its watchword will be Service; its motto: 'Obedience to God and loyalty to country are one and inseparable.' "

Danforth sat down and there was silence for a minute.

"My son," said his mother at length, "it first occurred to me to ask thee if thou hadst sufficiently consulted thy health and the duties already required of thee. But I will not mention this. I only say: May the divine Spirit abide with thee, strengthen and sanctify thee."

Danforth rose and kissed her.

"Blessed art thou among women," he said.

"I can say nothing now," was Dorothy's response to the young minister's questioning look; "my heart is too full. I can only add my prayer to your mother's."

"You are both as kind and as encouraging as you can be," said Danforth. "All my wicked suspicions that you might be earth-plodders, I now and forever revoke and disavow. And now I shall go back to my study, and you may discuss my project to your hearts' content. I know you are

going to say nice things of me, and I want to be out of hearing."

Pausing on the threshold, Danforth turned to his mother and Dorothy and recited these stanzas of Emerson's Concord ode:

" For He that flung the broad blue fold
O'ermantling land and sea
One third part of the sky unrolled
For the banner of the free.

United States! the ages plead,
Present and Past in undersong —
Go, put your creed into your deed,
Nor speak with double tongue.

Be just at home; then write your scroll
Of honor o'er the sea;
And bid the broad Atlantic roll
A ferry of the free.

And henceforth there shall be no chain,
Save underneath the sea
The wires shall murmur through the main
Sweet songs of liberty.

For He that worketh high and wise
Nor pauses in His plan,
Will take the sun out of the skies
Ere freedom out of man."

"Dorothy," said his mother when he had gone;
"may I not be proud of him?"

"Proud of him?" repeated the girl. "Why the angels in heaven are proud of him."



They said no more for a long time. When Mrs. Danforth spoke again it was upon some trivial and irrelevant matter. She had seen the great tears fall upon Dorothy's fingers as they worked.

X

One morning in the latter part of April, Father Hanlon sat at his desk drawing upon a sheet of paper parallel columns containing the reasons for and against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Having finished the process, he threw down his pen, and after the manner of most students, began soliloquizing. Let us overhear him.

"It is simply impossible that this great structure of Mosaic law should have been the product of one man or one age. Think of Moses in the wild Arabian desert laying down the exact measurements of a temple not built till three centuries later! Think of him describing the dress of the temple priests, legislating for tithes, offerings and purifications which were still hundreds of years in the future! If such a revelation were given him, it would have been absolutely unintelligible to him, and to the poor clans of exiles about him. Then there are David and Solomon, wholly ignorant of Moses' command that sacrifice be offered nowhere except in Jerusalem; for they and the whole line of Judges before them, sanctioned sacrifices in divers parts of Israel. Clearly these Jehovah-worshippers had never heard of the pretended Jehovah-law as to one sanctuary and one sacrifice. Manifestly the law is a bulwark of a later age built to centralize Israel's religion, and thus save it from the danger which very nearly destroyed it — amalgamation with the idolatrous worships of Canaan.

"And look at the character of some of the pretended revelations! Did the infinite Deity speak out of heaven these laws about the fringes of garments; about curing a house of leprosy; and that revolting ordeal of a suspected woman as described in Numbers? Never again can I believe that. If the Deity made any specific revelations to Moses, I think He would hardly have descended to such puerilities, and said nothing of the immortality of the soul — a truth of which the early Hebrews were ignorant in any ethical sense. For their Sheol was an indiscriminate assembly-place of the dead where no retribution or recompense existed.

"Of course all this does not affect the authority of the Church, though I must say I wish she had discovered this true import of primitive Judaism rather than that modern higher criticism should have first taught it."

A knock at the door interrupted these reflections, and in another moment Father Hanlon was bidding polite welcome to the Reverend Joseph Dooran.

"Well, Hanlon, how are you getting on?" was this gentleman's greeting, uttered with that air of "I am the lord of creation," as Ambrose used to describe it.

"Very pleasantly, indeed," answered Hanlon; "I like Axton thoroughly."

"I am sure you have been forced to repent of the liberalism you expressed to O'Murtagh and myself last month," stated Dooran, not as a ques-

tion, but as laying down an undeniable fact. "You find your Puritan neighbors pretty bitter. They can't get rid of their ancestral blood."

"I am more convinced than ever," was Ambrose's quiet reply, "that you men are utterly in the wrong. With very few exceptions, I find the non-Catholics friendly and even cordial. If we were somewhat more tractable and conciliatory ourselves, we should get on better. There are others besides Puritans who find it difficult to get rid of their ancestral blood."

"Absurd!" pronounced Dooran. "We are conciliatory enough. These men want to destroy the Church. Do you desire that the Church should assist them by laying her head on the block?"

"I think it might be well if some of our reverend, very reverend, right reverend, and most reverend gentlemen, did not hold their heads so high in the air," answered Hanlon.

"Be careful, Hanlon. Control your liberalism a bit more prudently; it is an evil hour for Catholic liberals," said Dooran.

"By the way," asked Ambrose, "can you tell me why my chief opponents here are not non-Catholics, but principally immigrants from Catholic countries?"

"Freemasonry!" replied Dooran dogmatically. "By the way, Hanlon, what is that book you are reading?"

Father Hanlon answered, visibly embarrassed: "Robertson Smith's Lectures on the Old Testament."

"Is he one of those higher critics?" questioned Dooran suspiciously, as he picked up the book.

"Yes," responded Hanlon, as he saw with sinking heart that Dooran was looking at Danforth's bookplate on the title page. The next question was inevitable: "Hanlon, are you borrowing rationalistic books from a Unitarian minister?"

"Mr. Danforth is my friend, and a friend I am proud to possess," answered Hanlon. "He is lending me some books on a portion of theological study in which I am deficient."

"You are going wrong, my dear young fellow," said the lord of creation. "Have you been impressed with this unbeliever's arguments?"

"He is not an unbeliever, Dooran," was Hanlon's hot reply. "Don't calumniate. Even a liberal is supposed to come under the law of Christian charity. Robertson Smith was a noble Christian according to his light. His life was beautiful and pure. And I don't mind admitting that I have been impressed with his arguments."

Dooran's next words were entirely unexpected by Hanlon. "May I take the book for a few days?" he asked. "I would like to see just how flimsy a case these critics make out for themselves."

"I think it is not improper in me to lend you the book," answered Hanlon. "I know Mr. Danforth would be glad to have you read it."

So the Reverend Joseph Dooran walked out of Ambrose Hanlon's room with Robertson Smith under his arm.

A week later he burst into Hanlon's room without the formality of knocking. Flushed with excitement and waving the borrowed volume in the air, he cried:

"Hanlon, it is magnificent! I never knew I had eyes in my head till I read this book. It is a revelation. It knocks our seminary course to pieces."

"Upon my word, Father Dooran," said Hanlon dumbfounded, "you take my breath away. Is Saul among the prophets?"

"I have gone through the book, Bible in hand," answered Dooran, "and I can find no escape from Smith's conclusions. The evolutionary process through which the Old Testament and Jewish religion have passed is as certain to my mind as an axiom of geometry. Lend me some more books, Hanlon, in a hurry."

Hanlon's conscience gave him a pang.

"Be careful about this line of reading, Father Dooran," he said earnestly. "I think your conversion is somewhat violent, and there may be danger to faith not far off."

"Nonsense!" replied Dooran. "Science is science; fact is fact. If faith cannot endure fact"—he ended with a shrug of the shoulders.

"You alarm me," protested Ambrose. "No amount of science can ever weaken the Church's divine authority."

"I suppose not," returned Dooran; "but just now I am after scholarship. What books are you going to give me?"

Without waiting for an answer, Dooran stepped up to Hanlon's desk and scanned the books scattered there. "These two will suit me," he said; "Budde's 'Religion of Israel' and Delitzsch's 'Babel and Bible.' Good-day," and he was gone, whistling gaily as he left.

Ambrose stood still for some time, looking grave and troubled. Then he went to his prie-dieu and knelt in prayer that Father Dooran might keep the faith.

XI

Father Hanlon had noticed that Miss Wakefield was present at his entire course of sermons on the Church. He was not wholly surprised, therefore, when on the day after he had finished the series, he was called to the parlor to see her. He had spoken to her from time to time, but always briefly, since making her acquaintance in Mr. Danforth's house; though Mary Kiley was forever talking of her and urging the priest to endeavor to help her towards the faith. The hope that he might give this assistance was uppermost in his mind as he opened the door and greeted her with his usual grave reserve.

Ambrose Hanlon was a man at whom persons who looked once nearly always looked twice. For it is not so common that we can dismiss it with a glance, to meet a young man of twenty-seven, on whose pale, thin face is set the sovereign stamp of gentle dignity and studious thoughtfulness; from whose guileless eyes shines a benevolence not to be concealed for all their shyness; and in whose smile we still may see the sunny heart of an unspoiled boy. Add to this that Ambrose had been studying too hard lately, so that on the morning of Miss Wakefield's visit he looked like an ascetic; not a harsh ascetic, but a gentle one, with a suggestion of manly sturdiness in reserve, and we shall not wonder that Dorothy's face bespoke admiration as she held out her hand in greeting.

"I have not met you often, Father Hanlon," she said, "but I seem to know you well, for Mr. Danforth speaks much of you. I am so glad that you and he are friends."

"I know you still better, Miss Wakefield," answered the priest, "for I call occasionally upon a worshipper of yours who seems restless whenever our conversation wanders very far from the subject of yourself."

"Dear, sweet Mary!" said Dorothy, with a sudden filling of the eyes; "she is my guardian angel."

"She is the whitest soul I ever knew," said Father Hanlon. "Her poor little body is hardly material enough to conceal the shining of her spirit."

"One of your sermons lately was on the holiness of the Church," remarked Dorothy. "I did not need that sermon, for I know Mary Kiley. I am aware what a saint she is."

Father Hanlon was silent, perceiving that Miss Wakefield had now come to the purpose of her visit.

"I attended the entire course of your instructions on the marks of the Church," resumed the girl, "and I felt impelled to call on you for a brief consultation. Will you allow me to talk about myself for a moment?"

"Certainly; in discussing religion, that is a practical necessity," answered the priest.

"I think I have strong religious inclinations," Dorothy began. "If I have, the credit is not mine

but my father's, who was one of the noblest and most reverent of men. I am a Unitarian, as all my family have been for generations. The Unitarian spirit and ideal are glorious to my mind. I can never abandon them, I am sure. The freedom of the spirit, the development of personality, the openness of mind, the exalted idea of duty and responsibility inculcated by the best Unitarian teachers, embody for me the highest and purest form of divine faith."

Father Hanlon felt disappointment. This girl, it was clear, had not come for instruction in the catechism. What had she come for?

"But," continued Dorothy, "there is much in Unitarianism which appears to be inadequate. It has only a handful of adherents. Why is it inadequate, inefficacious? This is a question that I have been pondering for months. Your recent sermons and services gave me some light upon it. We Unitarians do not sufficiently understand and cultivate the human side of religion. The ideals that are up in the sky, the light that falls upon us from above, we see plainly enough. But the subsoil of human nature, the common clay of human needs, we are likely to neglect. The sense of personal sin, the meaning of repentance, the warmer religious emotions, the impressiveness of liturgical forms, the closer contact with Christ, the more intimate dealings with God — these your Church enforces upon her children with magnificent felicity and power. Now we could not and would not

carry this side of religion so far as you carry it. The typical Unitarian mind could not endure it. But take over some of these vitally human features from the Catholic Church I think we must. We are soaring too high altogether. Some of our ministers, to my horror and shame, are preaching pantheism, or any other sort of ethical paganism; and I dread the spread of this spirit. We shall be saved from the danger if we learn a portion of the lesson so well learned by your sagacious Church: Keep hold of human nature! Do I weary you?"

"Please go on," urged Hanlon, "I see you have something further to say, and I am much interested."

"Yes, I have something further to say," resumed Dorothy; "but I fear lest perhaps you think me bold in saying it."

Father Hanlon reassured her, and she went on:

"While I think Unitarian Christianity has much to learn from Catholic Christianity, I am equally convinced that you have something to learn from us. The Catholic Church as I understand it is a magnificent memorial and epitome of the past; but it is too prone to overlook the present. It is an incomparable appeal to the mystical side of human nature, but it takes too little account of the ever-progressing rational side of our nature. It has clothed its dogmas in the language of an old philosophy which only baffles the modern mind. It has retained certain theocratic ideas which were

natural enough in the Holy Roman Empire, but are grotesque in democratic America. It canonizes the primitive Fathers and the mediæval schoolmen, but frowns upon the critical research and widening thought of to-day. It is autocratic; it allows no public opinion, it is aloof from the common mind of men; it tolerates no views, no project of reform or adaptation, save such as the Pope or the Curia may conceive. In this, too, it stands in vital contrast to our age, which is impatient of autocracies, and demands free expression for the ideas even of a minority, though that minority be but one. I cannot see how the Church can thrive amid growing light and freedom unless it incorporates into its spirit that individual liberty, that hearty welcome of modern thought, that less rigid formulation of belief which are so dear to us Unitarians. I am speaking frankly, you see."

"I would wish you to," said the priest, bowing. "You are going to draw some conclusions, are you not?"

"Yes," answered Dorothy, a slight tinge creeping into her cheek; "and in doing so I know not whether the kind indulgence you have shown me may not be overstrained."

"You need not fear that," the priest answered her, in a grave, kind voice. "It were well if priests oftener discussed these matters with persons of your intelligence and spiritual earnestness — if they could be found," he added with a smile.

"You are very kind," said Dorothy, and the

frank look of her beautiful, serious eyes bespoke how sincerely she uttered the words.

"It is not from to-day or yesterday," she went on, "that I have dreamed of a great, all-conquering faith which should win men's minds by its simple and unpuzzling creed, and fascinate their hearts by its warmth and solemnity and sincerity, bringing all God's human children into a vast brotherhood of Christ-seekers and Christ-lovers. Such a faith must possess the mystical depth of Catholicism and the rational, modern freedom of Unitarianism. Long ago I listened to sentiments like these from my father, and I have not ceased to develop them by such reflection and study as I am capable of giving them. The day of such a consummation is distant indeed. Darkness and distress and much falling-away must come first. And above all, the way must be broken open by God's elect few, His true prophets, yes and even His martyrs."

She paused for a moment and then resumed, looking straight at her astounded listener: "I have of late been thinking that you and Mr. Danforth might do something towards this glorious end. You are both well fitted for it. Could you not both by studying, preaching, writing, join hands and work toward the coming kingdom? Why not write a book together on the church that is to be? At least why not here in Axton break down some of the walls of division that so shamefully disunite us, and bring us all together now and then in a brotherhood of common worship?"

"I should not venture to suggest such a thing to you — for you are a priest of the most exclusive form of Christianity; and you have been recently telling us that the marks of Christ's true church are found in the Roman communion alone — but for the possibility that you do or will belong to that small band of men in your church, anathematized as liberals, who are doing their utmost to broaden Catholicism and make it the religious home for all mankind. These men are hastening, perhaps more than any others in the world, the advent of the ideal church of the future. For when the most rigid of all churches becomes less ecclesiastical and more humane, the lesser orthodoxies will not long hold out. And this is the end for which noble, liberal Catholics are working. If you would help them, and if Mr. Danforth would co-operate with you from the Unitarian side, I am convinced that from your joint efforts, hundreds, and who knows but thousands, of blind souls would see that the true basis of reunion is not in theologies which will always be at war, but in the hearts of men which are one in the eternal unity of flesh and blood, of joy and sorrow, of prayer and aspiration. For a man of scholarly mind and devout spirit, this seems to me the most thrilling vocation in the world. Is it folly to you?"

"Miss Wakefield," answered Father Hanlon; "the idea of a reunited Christendom, of a religious brotherhood embracing all men of good will, ap-

peals to me very deeply, as I hardly need to tell you. Anything that I could do towards so great an end, I would do with all my heart. But I belong to and believe in a highly exclusive church, as you say. And I cannot admit that this church will, or can, ever abandon or radically change a single dogma of her creed. Believing this is why I cannot join outright the liberal Catholics whom you admire. For, as I understand them — I have not read their writings, I confess — these men are calling upon the church to lessen the rigidity of her dogmatic formulas. But, speaking to you as frankly as you have spoken to me, I am every day growing into greater sympathy with the liberals, whom I acknowledge I had always before detested, in their efforts to reform Catholicism in matters of discipline and administration. In concessions to scholarship and to the democracy which is winning the world — concessions to the *Zeitgeist*, to use an almost consecrated expression — the Church is certainly remiss. To this extent your ideal speaks a message to me. Whether it will ever speak a deeper one, I cannot say."

Soon after, the conversation was at an end. Miss Wakefield went away with mingled feelings in which disappointment and satisfaction fought for the upper hand; Father Hanlon returned to his study to reflect for a long time on this wonderful Puritan girl, who had come to announce to him a new vocation and a new scheme for a united Christendom.

XII

Weeks slipped into months, months into a year over Ambrose Hanlon's head as he studied, thought and prayed. The scholar's passion possessed him wholly. Books had become a species of idolatry. Into his blood penetrated every day more deeply the craving for the student's bread of life, that Truth which cometh down from heaven, whereof if a man eat he shall have eternal life. The least possible time he gave to sleep; none to recreation; as much as was needed, but that was little, to his handful of a parish. All the rest he reserved most jealously for study. Every day found him many hours, six, eight and ten, at his desk; and every midnight-stroke of the old town clock fell upon his wakeful ear as he still held the book to straining eyes beneath the one poor gas light in his room. His first summer in Axton he went out into the woods a mile distant four and five days in the week, carrying his books and notes, as he had fondly anticipated, and there he worked at biblical criticism, the history of doctrine, and the developments of religion. He listened neither to the singing birds about him nor to the murmur of the trees above his head, so absorbed was he in striving to catch the accents of science and of truth.

Far more important problems than the authenticity of the Pentateuch, he came in the course of this time to consider. He was at work on the New Testament, its validity, the doctrinal development

discernible in it, and how to discover beneath the accretions which a scientific study of the Gospels very soon revealed to him, the true sayings and the genuine spirit of his master, Jesus. As a preparation for this line of research, he devoted some weeks, acting on a suggestion of Danforth's, to a study of the ideas and the literature current among the Jews just prior to the appearance of the Lord. He followed step by step the progress of Israel's Messianic hope, and read every line of the pre-Christian apocalypses — the Sibylline oracles, the book of Enoch, pseudo-Baruch, and fourth Esdras. There he learned that it was the prevalent belief that Elias or perhaps Moses must come first as Precursor; that there would be fallings of sun and stars; a darkened moon and mighty earthquakes; that the world would soon end in thaumaturgic catastrophe; and Messiah appear to judge the nations of the earth. Turning to his New Testament he saw reflections of these ideas in the Transfiguration story; in the discourses describing the end of the world; in the belief which the Apostles, the early Christians, and, if the record is to be believed, Jesus himself, shared, that the end was near; that "this generation shall not pass away" till the mighty disaster and the general judgment be accomplished. He traced the origin of the Trinity-belief, discovering vestiges of it in the Rabbinical speculations, and in Platonic philosophy as adapted to Hebrew ideas by Philo of Alexandria; and saw it growing into dogma as it were

before his eyes, through the influence of the baptismal formula which at the first had been merely "into the name of Jesus." But above all other points he selected one as a special object of research. This was the dogma of redemption, the atonement for the fall of Adam by the blood-satisfaction of Christ. This he felt was the cornerstone of the whole structure of traditional theology, and he gave his best efforts to exploring the foundation on which it rested. He fought hard to hold this crucial belief intact. The one text supporting it: "The Son of Man has come to give his life as a ransom for many," he clung to with desperation, refusing to believe the contention of advanced critics that it was a Pauline addition to, or at least interpretation of, a saying of the Lord's. But as his mind grew into the method and spirit of criticism, he faltered at the weak support which the life and words of Jesus give to this momentous article of his creed. If the eternal Deity came down from heaven for this primary and overshadowing purpose to offer satisfaction to God's justice for a sin committed thousands of years before, ought not the gospels to be full of it? Should it not be reiterated in Christ's discourses? Yet Christ never once mentioned Adam or original sin; and for all we can gather from the gospels we could not say He had ever heard of either. In the texts which most intimately disclose the mind of Christ, and are most unmistakably genuine, there is no remotest reference to what is now held

to have been the essential reason for His appearing on earth. Was not the dogma an effort at explaining that stunning scandal to faith, the Lord's ignominious death? Did it not arise because the early believers simply could not have kept their faith in Jesus if they thought He had no more divinity in Him than to be subjected to a criminal's death? Granted any faith whatever in Him, His first followers must have regarded His death of shame as voluntarily undergone in fulfilment of some vast theurgic scheme. Is it not to Paul and to Pauline semi-rabbinism that we owe the ideas of first Adam and second Adam; of a race lost by sin and redeemed by blood? Hardly possible as it is to fit these conceptions into the life of Jesus, how natural that they should have arisen in explanation of his death!

But if the Gospels reflect the ideas of a time later than Jesus; if their apocalyptic sections are but transcripts of notions prevalent in Palestine even before Jesus; if the doctrines of the Trinity and of baptism have grown beyond what the authentic words of Christ warrant; if the blood-redemption dogma is the product of theologizing, and not a teaching of the Lord, what was to become of Father Hanlon's faith? After many days of wretchedness and many hours of prayer, he put this question once to Danforth. The minister's answer was to refer him to the writings of the liberal Catholics who had contrived a philosophy of conformity according to which neither

the present result of criticism nor their adherence to Catholicism need be abandoned. If they could find a way out of the perplexity, said Danforth, perhaps Hanlon could. Acting on the suggestion the young priest devoted weeks to the reading of Loisy, Tyrrell, LeRoy, and the other leaders of advanced Catholicity. From them he learned methods of interpreting ancient formulas and subscribing to venerable creeds, which were hardly less amazing to him than the revelations of his critical studies. Baptism means simply the solemn and public initiation into the body of believers; confession and absolution the process by which the sinner, having given signs of penitence, is officially declared to be reunited to the true spiritual church of Christ and communion of saints; the Trinity, the eternal Spirit as we see it working in diverse ways; the atonement, the uplift to a regenerated life that results from the contemplation of the Lord's heroic death. At modes of interpretation like these, of a creed which rests upon the total denial of private interpretation, Ambrose was at first profoundly shocked. In such a system, he felt, anything might mean anything. It was trifling with words. It fell far short of downright sincerity. But as he grew accustomed to the thought of these men, he perceived that their scheme of conformity was not without sublimity as well as ingenuity. If the Nicene age could put new wordings upon ancient dogmas, why cannot ours? If doctrine has undergone development,

and vast development already, why may we not help it forward to a new development required by science and the modern spirit? Is it not better to make the attempt at least, than to cut loose from the Church, abandon her many helps to the interior life, and throw ourselves into a work of disintegration rather than one of reconstruction? Yes, there was a reason and some species of justification for liberal Catholicism; though try as he might, Ambrose could not make it fit his conscience comfortably. Rid it of subtle insincerity he could not; nor could he avoid thinking that with all the liberal Catholics' horror of separation and schism, they were far more widely removed from the Church, as a teaching church, than were any of the Protestant sects at the time of the Reformation. Still he was one with these liberal thinkers of his church in most features of their activity. With them he recognized the need of many reforms within Catholicism, reform in worship, in government, and above all in Rome's attitude to scholarship and modern democracy. Clearly, if he was to remain a Catholic he must consider himself a member of this modernist party, however he might be distressed by their subscription to the creed in a non-natural sense.

The clouds about him grew darker, the unrest within his breast deeper with every day. At times he would lift weary eyes from the book on his desk and gaze, now at the crucifix upon the wall, now at two mottoes hung above his table which he had

copied from the first book that Danforth lent him: "He has no right to call himself a child of Truth who will not follow her in meek submission whithersoever she leads." "Love Truth as you love God; not rashly, not violently, not with reckless passion, but calmly, considerately, thoughtfully, with unsullied conscience, with aspiring mind, with indestructible trust." Noble words, and he was doing his best to live up to them. Sincere and candid Truth he was seeking through laborious days and lonely nights; and loving it too with a pure conscience, and, at least as yet, with courage. Yet whither was it leading him? Back to what once he was, what once he held with so radiant a conviction? "No!" tolled like a bell within his heart. Whither then? No answer came and darkness fell upon his eyes. Whither? Up rough and stony paths he knew; but on what summit he should stand at the journey's end, he could not tell, nor dared to think.

More than once he left his books open upon the table and went for sheer relief to visit the dear child Mary, that suffering saint. How her words both comforted and pained him!

"I am blessedly happy, Father," she would say. "Our Lord condescends to comfort me. The Church's holy prayers and Sacraments are life to me. I must try to be more patient till Jesus gives me release, and I behold Him, if I am not too sinful, face to face."

One day as he was leaving her, and had said,

with a pang of sorrow in his heart: "My dear little girl, pray for me to the Lord who is so near you," Mary, holding his hand, answered: "Father, you are suffering, are you not?"

"Yes, child," he said; "but it is a small matter."

"I am sure," said Mary, "that to-morrow, when you say Mass, Our Lord reposing in your hands will smile upon you, and give you His unspeakable peace."

"Ah!" said Ambrose to himself, as he left the Kiley cottage that morning; "what can frozen scholarship give in return for what it is so desperately trying to take away? Little Mary is an apology for the ancient ways of the tender Savior, that is unanswerable to all the intellect in Germany."

But when he returned to his books, the austere voice of science and truth spoke in his heart as imperatively as before. Promising no comfort, uttering no raptures, holding forth no thrilling joys, it spoke to him its simple word of august authority. How cold and stern were its tones! How firm and unrelenting was its accent! Thus was Ambrose Hanlon divided between head and heart. Thus he passed into that tragic crisis out of which have come both the bitterest cynics and the holiest saints of our humanity.

His opportunities for discussing his problems with Josiah Danforth had now become rare. Danforth was absent some days of every week lecturing on Christian patriotism and founding

new branches of his Conscience and Country League. Great audiences were greeting the young minister everywhere. His discourses, so lofty, so earnest, so mystical, so filled with a sacred love of country and humanity, were arousing an enthusiasm like that which attends some extraordinary revival of religious zeal. But despite these occupations, Danforth was affectionately following every development in the mind of his friend. He encouraged him to see that these mental distresses were but the growing-pains of a God-approaching soul. He confirmed his faith in the eternal verities of the all-Holy. He comforted him by showing that his mental emancipation was meant for a preparation for some diviner vocation than he had ever known before. In all ways he was a brother to the troubled priest, his stay and strong support. These kind offices touched Ambrose Hanlon's heart with a gratitude which he hardly dared trust himself to express. He came to venerate Danforth as a man of God, and to love him as the best of friends. Through the inspiration that the minister gave him, he began at last to perceive joyousness and warmth in the aspect of that Truth which at first had appeared so destructive and so stern. His natural gentleness of character was steadied and fortified with a firmer sense of integrity than his previous training had been able to give him. Not for the world would he undo the mental and spiritual transformation through which he was passing. He rejoiced in it. But still he suffered. His

hours of desolation were many; and looking into the future he could discern no certainty except loneliness and trials manifold.

His most frequent visitor during this period was the Reverend Joseph Dooran. Unstable in mind as he was unlovable in character, this man had caught indiscriminately at both the fairly ascertained results and the merest hypotheses of criticism; bothered himself not at all with any painstaking verification of either; and leaped at one wild jump into the most advanced conclusions and the most radical theories of the critical school. Ambrose, at first alarmed, became simply vexed and bored by Dooran's impetuosity, lack of method, and wholly unscholarly and unreverential attitude of mind. Dooran came regularly to borrow books which Ambrose would have refused him, but that a serious quarrel would have followed the refusal. He disliked to discuss any question with Dooran; and contented himself now and then refuting some extravagant opinion which had caught Dooran's fancy, and with warning him that he was going about the business of these studies in an utterly unscientific fashion. Useless all! Dooran continued to be the slave of the latest book he read, the newest hypothesis he came upon. Temperamentally he was beyond teaching. As a rule, Father Hanlon maintained the traditional views of Scripture and doctrine against Dooran, and now and then silenced him with arguments which were far from conclusive to himself. Still, un-

congenial as Dooran was, Ambrose confided much to him. Times were when his overburdened heart sought the relief of sharing — if sharing it could be called — its hidden sorrow even with this unsympathetic nature. In return Dooran frankly confessed that only by a straining of courtesy could he himself be called a Catholic any longer. Long before he had begun his late course of reading, he said, he had been thoroughly disgusted at the administrative side of the church. As one of the consultors of the diocese he knew, he declared, how great an influence scheming, sycophancy, and the power of money possessed in the allotting of fat places in fields ecclesiastical; and how little any higher providence had to do with it. He had tried not to yield to this feeling and had purposely cultivated a stringent conservatism, he reminded Ambrose; but now that he had come to see on how slender a basis not only church-discipline but church-dogma rested, he was going to make no further pretenses, and cared not who knew of his liberal and radical tendencies.

Ambrose was somewhat apprehensive lest from Dooran's reckless speaking in the presence of conservative priests trouble might arise for both of them. But this was the least of his worries, and neither to Father Dooran nor to the jeopardy of Father Dooran's faith did he give more than an occasional and passing thought.

XIII

Father Hanlon had free access to Mr. Danforth's house and in the minister's absence he spent many hours there amid the treasures of the library. He often attended the evening devotions of the household, and no longer with a smarting conscience. His mind had grown too large now to believe, indeed he was shocked and humiliated that he had ever believed, that it was a sin to kneel with any of God's children in supplication and worship to the Father of us all. These half-hours of silent prayer refreshed him; and in the presence of Mrs. Danforth and Dorothy he found a comfort of which his human nature was sorely in need.

One evening when they had risen from meditation, Father Hanlon returned to the library to finish the reading of an article in a biblical encyclopedia. As he descended the stairs half an hour later to leave the house, he found Miss Wakefield in the entry setting out for home. The priest wondered if he should offer to accompany her, as it was now quite ten o'clock. He decided not to make the offer. So far as he was aware, Danforth never went with her; and the streets of Axton surely were safe. So with merely a word of good-night, he took the short street leading to the square and Dorothy the broad road on which her uncle's house and in general the better class of residences were situated. Dorothy had not gone twenty yards from the house when a man stepped

from the dark roadside and said in a voice that she had reason to remember:

"Mees-a Wakefield, I must spik to you."

The girl instantly turned away from the man and called out:

"Father Hanlon, will you come here, please?"

In a few rapid steps the priest was at her side. Pasquale Ciasca still stood confronting her.

"Father Hanlon," said Dorothy, "this man is annoying me."

"You scoundrel!" exclaimed Hanlon, stepping up to the Italian, resolved to give battle on the spot.

Ciasca in all probability could have killed the fragile student had they engaged in combat; but he had no desire to get himself into serious trouble. Implacable as was his native revengefulness, it was also calculating and cautious. He yielded ground therefore before the priest's advance, and dropped into the roadside thicket, leaving behind him a trail of fluent imprecations.

Dorothy's earnestly spoken gratitude was very pleasing to Father Hanlon. There was no shallow sentiment about it. Simply in his grave way he felt ennobled at having done this refined girl a service, and at having been ready to risk his life in doing it.

Father Hanlon knew of Ciasca. The fellow had of late become a violent partisan of Murdock's, and was working strenuously among his Italian countrymen to enlist them among the anarchists,

or at least to deter them from the practice of religion. His success had been only too pronounced. One of his boasts that had reached the ears of Father Hanlon was that he had a larger Italian parish than the priest, though he was the devil's lieutenant, while the priest claimed to be God's.

As Hanlon was leaving Miss Wakefield at her gate she gave him her hand, repeating her appreciation of his act, and said:

"I trust, Father Hanlon, that this kindness to me will not lead to any danger for you. That man is to be dreaded. Will you not take every precaution lest he injure you?"

He assured her, smiling, that he had not the slightest fear, and took leave of her with much less concern about the matter in his breast than there was in hers. As he approached the hotel the incident dropped from his mind, and he fell to reflecting upon the reading that he had done that night in Josiah Danforth's library. He saw not the crouching figure that waited ahead of him where the street turned into the square. He saw no one except Nahum Cuttle coming out of his front door to put up the shutters for the night. As he was about to make the turn in the road, the earth fell away beneath his feet, the roar as of a hundred cataracts overwhelmed him, and he knew no more.

The inn-keeper saw him fall, and rushed to help him. "Poor dear man!" said Nahum, as he tenderly carried him into the house; "I'd commit

murder to-night if I knew the black scoundrel that did this. Poor dear boy!"

On the third day after the assault Father Hanlon left his bed for a short time in the afternoon, and with Nahum's help went down stairs and sat propped up with pillows in a reclining chair on the piazza. It was a beautiful day in late October. It had been warm all day; and now the sun was sinking in great billows of clouds that were massed upon the horizon. A brooding tenderness and a profound peace seemed to hover over the earth. It was an hour for great and tranquil thoughts. The soul of Ambrose was in a mood to match this evening prayer of nature. He had been near to death. Death? Was there not solace in the word and thought? Yes, a great and sustaining solace. If he had died, it would have been not only without complaint, but with quiet joy. He rejoiced to find that he had no fear of death. He was not what he once was; his mind had changed, his spirit had grown. He had studied and meditated. He had gone far seeking Truth. But still he was one with God. Still he was a priest. To the divine he was consecrated; to the divine he had been true. He felt that God's Spirit had been leading him; that God was at this moment comforting him. He looked at the setting sun, at the quiet earth, at the benignant, all-embracing sky. They all gave answer to his own spirit: "The Eternal Heart and Will are merciful and tender and good." Tears filled his eyes. It had been long since re-

ligious emotion had brought him tears. But now the assurance within his heart, the trust that sustained his soul, the consciousness of deep communion with One that was higher than he, overcame him, and he yielded to the full felicity of this holy hour.

So absorbed was he in these meditations that he saw not a young woman walking rapidly towards him, her eyes fastened upon him eagerly, tenderly. Not till she was upon the steps of the piazza did he notice her.

"Father Hanlon," said Dorothy, "permit me the liberty," and holding his hand in both hers, she bent and kissed it reverently.

They were silent for a moment. Dorothy was gazing upon him with profound, but fairly concealed emotion. He looked so utterly forlorn and weak; his wan face so pure and spiritual!

"Father," she said at last; "I fear you are not getting sufficient care."

He smiled faintly. "Yes," said his weak voice, "I am very well looked after. Nahum is the soul of kindness."

"But a man cannot be a nurse," protested Dorothy. "Are you left alone all day long in that lonely room of yours, with no one to give you what you need?"

"Nahum looks in from time to time," he answered. "I really have everything necessary. And as for loneliness, a priest, you know, is used to that. It is our portion, and we take it without complaint. We are not accustomed to much at-

tention. So please do not exaggerate this trifling inconvenience of mine."

"I will not exaggerate," said Dorothy; "but I have every reason to wish to do what I can for you. I was the cause of your suffering." Her voice was nearly beyond her control as she spoke the words.

"The suffering is not worth mentioning," he assured her. "Such as it is, I consider it a favor, if that which brought it on was of the least service to you." Then with a smile he added: "But my life is charmed, you know. That vocation that you once suggested to me is still before me."

"Yes," was Dorothy's quiet remark, "it is still before you, and I feel that you will yet undertake it."

Father Hanlon's face was grave again. "I think I am much nearer to it now than I was when you first spoke of it to me," he said in a low tone, scarcely audible to her, as though he were soliloquizing.

"Do you fear it?" asked the girl.

He did not answer for some moments. "I would like to say No," he responded finally, "but of late I have been trying to cultivate Truth above all things, and I fear I must say I do fear it. Heroic men, your great ideal calls for, and I have never believed myself a man of such dimensions."

"It is war not peace that makes the soldier," said Dorothy. "I think you have shown your ability to rise to the demands of a crisis."

"Miss Wakefield," he deprecated; "I feel humiliated at your overestimation of a beggarly incident. But as to the future I would like to strengthen the hands of our Catholic liberals. I would like to break down some of the unnecessary walls of division that stand in the way of Christian reunion. If I ever do make the attempt, I shall be that most to be pitied of all men, a conscientious priest disgraced by authority, cast off by friends, and a source of pain to those I most love. You spoke a moment ago of loneliness. Ah! but that is loneliness, the loneliness of utter desolation."

He relapsed into thoughtful silence. Dorothy looked at him with eyes full of sorrow.

"Father Hanlon," she said, "it is impossible for you to go on thinking and feeling so. If you allow yourself to get into this condition of spiritual and mental anguish, your life will be ruined. You cannot endure the strain. If I read your nature aright, you would soon break down completely beneath unrest and discontent. You feel too deeply to bear such a burden long. You must act; you must come to a definite resolve. Whatever pain such action might bring, it would be far less harmful than the silent inactivity of abiding sorrow. But I must cease speaking of these matters now. I have already tried your strength too long, and I must let you rest. Good-by, dear friend. You will allow a Unitarian girl to pray for you?"

"I implore her to do so," was the priest's earnest answer. "And may that Unitarian girl herself be vouchsafed the best blessings that God can give!"

As Dorothy walked away in the gathering twilight, Father Hanlon looked after her marveling. He had never told her of his condition of mind and soul; yet she divined it perfectly. His acquaintance with her had been brief and far from intimate; yet in telling him that he could not long endure his present distress, she had revealed to him a side of his nature that he had not himself observed. What intuition she had! What sympathy!

XIV

The Reverend Joseph Dooran was seated at his desk reading a book, lent him by Hanlon, on the traces of Græco-Alexandrian philosophy in the fourth Gospel, when Father O'Murtagh walked into the room.

"What are you reading, Dooran?" asked the unceremonious visitor, glancing at the book. "Humph! more infidelity. Dooran, this kind of business has made you a changed man."

"Do you think so?" answered Dooran coldly.

"You have not only been reading rationalist authors, but you have been talking freely, and I may say scandalously, about holy things," continued Father O'Murtagh.

"You are frank I must say," remarked Dooran, his little eyes and harsh mouth expressing angry resentment.

"I think frankness is what you need," persisted O'Murtagh, not disconcerted in the least.

"You would like me to confine myself to the penny catechism, and to St. Thomas, from whom we are separated by seven centuries of intellectual progress, I dare say." Dooran put his best sarcasm into the words.

"Seven centuries of intellectual rubbish would be nearer the truth," asserted O'Murtagh. "So you think these modern lads, Harnack and — and — the rest of them, are greater than the Fathers, the Saints, and even the Gospel, do you?"

"I do not care to enter into a controversy with you," said Dooran.

"Faith, and I don't want a controversy either. The whole parcel of modern criticism is impious folly. It is the insane pride of men who think that God is impertinent because He proposes to their belief mysteries to which their idiotic heads must surrender. It isn't worth a controversy. The best argument against these fellows is to kick them into the street. The best use for their books is to pitch them into the fire."

So saying, Father O'Murtagh helped himself to one of Dooran's cigars, lighted it and sat back, blowing fragrant clouds into the air, massive and imperturbable.

"How many of these so-called rationalist books did you ever read?" asked Father Dooran.

"Divvle a one at all and very few of any other kind," confessed the Irishman unabashed. "Half the crazy foolishness in the world, yes nine-tenths of it, comes from reading. It's faith that men need; they have too many books. Has young Hanlon any faith left in him at all?"

"Of course he has," responded Dooran. "That is the way with you conservatives; as soon as a man begins to know anything, you yell out that he is a heretic. Good heavens! can no one have faith but a jackass?"

"Poor man!" said O'Murtagh, smiling comically at his exasperated companion. "Dooran, you are the biggest jackass in the diocese this minute."

"O'Murtagh," retorted Dooran, flushing very red under the insult; "I must ask you to leave my house."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed his big tormenter. "Well, then I refuse to leave."

"Then I will leave you," said Dooran, rising.

"Sit down, me boy, sit down," advised O'Murtagh, waving his hand toward the chair. "Perhaps I have come here to do you a great favor."

"I don't want your favors, sir," said Dooran on the threshold.

"All right, sir," replied O'Murtagh. "It is in my power to confer on you the greatest benefit of your life, and I came here to do it; but perhaps I had better be going."

Father O'Murtagh knew his man. Father Dooran had a keen eye to the main chance. Of all persons in the world whose interests he was likely to forget, Joseph Dooran was the last.

"If you have anything decent to say to me, say it," he remarked.

"When you sit down I will make my little speech," observed O'Murtagh calmly.

Father Dooran sat down.

"I suppose you know that Bishop Shyrne is a very orthodox man?" began O'Murtagh.

"Yes."

"I suppose you know that he despises liberal Catholics?"

"Yes."

"I suppose you know that he is about to ask

Rome for a coadjutor bishop with right of succession?"

"Yes."

"The bishop has great influence in Rome. The man whom he recommends will surely get the appointment. You are aware of that too?"

Father Dooran was silent.

"Well then, I have it on the highest authority that he is to request the Holy See to name as his coadjutor, the Reverend Joseph Dooran."

The gentleman to whom this unexpected announcement was made sank down in his chair, a pallor came into his cheeks, and in the stress of his nervousness he began biting his finger-nails. Excitement always brought his incurable uncouthness to the surface.

"Of course," resumed O'Murtagh, "if Bishop Shyrne hears of your recent reading and manner of speaking it's all up with you. Perhaps by way of no harm, and as though you had no knowledge of what I have told you, you could manage to do or say something that would prove your conservative orthodoxy. It would be decisive with the old man just at this time I think."

Father Dooran rose and held out his hand. "Father O'Murtagh," he said, "you are the best of friends. If I get this appointment, be assured you will be well rewarded for what you have done to-day."

When O'Murtagh had gone, Joseph Dooran closed the book he had been reading, placed it with

three other borrowed volumes, tied them up, and summoned his stable-man.

“Dennis,” he said, “take these books to Father Hanlon to-morrow morning.”

XV

As soon as Father Hanlon recovered from his injury, he busied himself with preparations for the dedication of the humble church which he had built. To his great delight, Bishop Shyrne had told him that he would be unable to be present at the dedication. Ambrose felt a repugnance for the elaborate ritual of a pontifical service, and was happy in the anticipation of a simple ceremony. A large number of the non-Catholics of Axton would be there, for they had come to regard the quiet, cultivated young pastor with great respect. Several of them were regular attendants at his services, drawn by his earnest, unpretending eloquence. For their sakes too he was glad that the bishop was not coming. He dreaded the effect upon them of the grotesque ceremonial of a mass "*coram pontifice*."

The building of his little chapel had bound Father Hanlon very closely to Axton. The prospect of many years with his simple flock pleased him with a great content. Surely, he often reflected, it is best for me to stay with my people. I am helping them. I am doing a certain and sure good. Why, then, venture forth with the liberal Catholics, incur disgrace, abandon this scene of service, and perhaps do more harm than good by openly agitating for reforms which our generation shall not see? This manner of thinking was only a half-solace, however; for that imperious, that new, that awful Truth of which he had lately

learned the meaning would not still its voice. But a half-solace was better than none; and as his church took shape before his eyes, he was fain to dwell fondly on his future ministry there; on the children he would instruct; the afflicted he would comfort; the dead over whom he would chant the requiem. It was a sweet and inviting anticipation, and he found his highest happiness in contemplating it.

One evening a fortnight before the dedication, he found on his desk when he returned from overseeing the workmen at the chapel, a note in Bishop Shyrne's own hand, summoning him to the episcopal residence without delay. "I hope he has not changed his mind about coming," said Ambrose, as he turned to his ever ready books.

The next afternoon he knocked at the door of the bishop's study and entered in response to the high-pitched "Come in!"

The priest knelt and kissed the episcopal ring, and said pleasantly:

"I am glad to see you, Bishop. I hope you are well."

The bishop made no answer, but took a letter from his desk, handed it to Father Hanlon and said: "Read that and give an account of yourself."

This meant trouble, and Father Hanlon's pale face grew paler. His hand trembled as he took the letter, and a physical weakness came upon him before he read a word. He sat down, though he

had not been asked to do so, and read as follows:

Right reverend and dear Bishop,

For some time I have thought of writing you on the painful subject which I am about to bring to your notice, but refrained from doing so lest I injure a brother priest without sufficient justification. But my conscience will not allow me to keep silence any longer. You, as bearing the chief responsibility of the pastoral office in this diocese, ought to know the matter of which I write; and I deem it my duty, irrespective of human considerations, to give you the following information.

Father Hanlon of Axton, I most deeply regret to say, has fallen into a deplorable state of mind regarding the faith. He has become intimate with the Unitarian minister of Axton — a thorough rationalist,— has done an enormous amount of dangerous reading in books which this minister has lent him, and is now infected with higher criticism, semi-rationalism, and liberal Catholicism. How entirely out of sympathy he is with the traditional theology of the Church you may gather from the fact that he burned two volumes of Suarez, as books unworthy of a man of modern views. This I learned from his own lips.

It pains me to write this. We all remember Ambrose Hanlon as up to a year ago our brightest young man, full of promise, and a man of prayer. He is terribly changed; so changed that I fear the very worst for him. Surely, dear Bishop, this is a matter that you ought to know. Perhaps you may be able to avert the disaster that I fear.

Trusting that you will understand the spirit in which I write these sorrowful lines, I am

Yours with filial respect,

JOSEPH DOORAN,



P. S.— I cannot say to what extent Father Hanlon has had an evil influence on his parishioners; but I cannot help suspecting that his sermons have shown of late a spirit that is far from being genuinely Catholic.
J. D.

As soon as Ambrose finished reading this letter, he laid it upon the desk. He could no more have held it longer in his hand than he could have held a snake.

"Well, sir?" came the bishop's sharp staccato.

Father Hanlon, trying desperately to be calm, said after a moment in a low, even voice:

"I hope the man who wrote that letter was sincere. I will not judge his motives. I will only say that it would be easy for you to derive from his charges an opinion of me which would be utterly unjust."

"A pretty weak defence! A pretty weak defence!" said the bishop with curling lip. "Now, sir," he went on, "answer me these specific questions. Did you burn two volumes of Suarez?"

"I gave them to my landlord, and I think he burned them. I told him to do so," answered Hanlon.

"Why did you do that, sir?"

"I will tell you frankly why I did it," was the priest's response. "I spent six years studying metaphysical theology, almost entirely to the neglect of positive and critical theological learning. I thought that the whole world of the intellect could be packed into the syllogisms of Suarez or

of the Summa. Lately I have discovered that this education of mine was scandalously inadequate. I found that I was ignorant of a vast amount of historical work that has been done in modern times in the field of theology. I was an infant, a fool, in the presence of a man of modern education. So angry was I on waking up to this state of things that in a moment of petulance, I took Suarez' '*De Angelis*' from my shelf and had it flung into the fire. It was childish, I suppose; but the provocation was very great."

"And what did you substitute for Suarez?" The bishop's effort not to lose his temper was painfully evident.

"Biblical criticism and the history of primitive Christianity," replied Hanlon.

"Biblical criticism!" repeated his lordship contemptuously. "Biblical rationalism out of the books of German infidels, you probably mean."

"I have read some German authors," acknowledged Hanlon. "To any man who would become acquainted with modern scholarship in this department of science, the work done by German investigators is indispensable."

"Your patron saint, I dare say, is Hermann Harnack?" sneered the successor of the apostles.

"I have never heard of Hermann Harnack."

"Ho! Ho! Ho! You are a fine rationalist never to have heard of the great high priest of infidel criticism."

"He is wholly unknown to me," said Ambrose;

"though I have read several writings of a namesake of his called Adolf Harnack."

"Hm!" said the bishop. "Now what about this Unitarian minister? Is he a friend of yours?"

"He is."

"You visit him?"

"I do."

"You read his books?"

"Yes."

"Do you think that proper in a Catholic priest?"

"I can see no crime or impropriety in it."

"Then you must be given a few lessons in what constitutes priestly propriety. Now, finally, sir, to what extent have you spread your new views and your un-Catholic spirit among your people? Answer me on your honor."

"Bishop Shyrne," replied Hanlon warmly; "to accuse me of disseminating among my parishioners any views which would in the least disturb them, is an outrageous injustice. That insinuation is what makes Dooran's letter to you abominable and wicked. I preach the Gospel to my people to the best of my power. I am their priest, not their schoolmaster; and I have never uttered in the presence of a single Catholic in Axton, opinions about which students and critics are debating. I cannot allow you or any other man to make this charge of treachery and dishonor against me."

"Let that pass," said the relentless prelate; "you have done enough without it to call for the

severest rebuke that I can give. You have not been a faithful priest. You have not been true to your vocation. You have ruined the bright prospects that lay before you. You have pained and disappointed me grievously. You must change at once sir, for you are rushing headlong into temporal and eternal disaster. For the present my orders are these. Remember them and obey them: For the space of six months you will read no rationalist criticism. You must begin to take measures for breaking off your intimacy with that Unitarian minister. And finally you shall not say mass till next Sunday. To-day is Wednesday, and I suspend you for the remainder of this week. Moreover I shall be present at the dedication of your church a week from Sunday. I must look over the ground myself. I will not remove you now from Axton, though I should be amply justified in doing so. Your days there, however, are numbered. That is all sir; please leave the house."

Poor Ambrose! He, the soul of fidelity; he, the unstained mirror of honor; he, the guileless youth that invested all men with the virtues of his own heart, a calumniated outcast, a suspended priest! Almost crying aloud for pain he strode the city streets in the fast-falling gloom of the winter night, with his eyes closed to all save the crushing weight upon his own heart. He stumbled into several persons, he was twice under the hoofs of horses at crossings, but he minded not. He neither saw the angry looks of those whom he

struck against, nor heard the imprecation of the drivers who had nearly run him down. Nothing he knew except that he was disgraced, that he was foully dealt with, that he was shipwrecked in the mid-ocean of despair. On he walked rapidly, rapidly. The streets into which he had come were no longer the brilliant thoroughfares of trade, but dark and ill-kept alleys. It was nothing to him. Down one gloomy lane and up another, but he could not leave his grief behind. His work gone for naught! His pure life rewarded with the punishment which the canons of the church reserve for the reprobate and criminal! Of what use to do one's duty? Of what avail to bear the sacerdotal burden?

Confusedly, sluggishly, it dawned upon him that a man had grasped his arm and was saying something; that he was being pushed toward that door behind which were sounds of revelry. He was quite across the threshold before he came to himself. A huge fellow had him by the arm. A deep voice was saying: "Come in old man, an' drown yer sorrier! Make a night of it with the boys an' gals! Set 'em up for th' crowd!" Ambrose looked at the man with eyes wild with terror and drew back from him. Then he glanced down the room, his heart racing with the speed of mortal fright. A dozen men were standing at the bar; four or five others, with as many rakish women, were seated at small tables.

"Come in, honey," called one of the women.

"Come on, pardner," said the man beside him, "make a night of it with th' boys an' gals. Come up an' fetch 'im, Liz," he called out to a lewd creature who was sitting on the knee of a grizzly roué.

"Sure!" answered the wastrel thus addressed, jumping to her feet and running toward Ambrose.

With white face the young priest dashed to the door. The man that had led him into the den attempted to stay him; but the sharp knuckles of a small fist struck him full in the mouth and sent him cut and bleeding to the floor. With foul obscenity ringing in his ears and a wild tumult of horrible things raging in his heart, Father Hanlon ran for his life — for more than his life. He jumped into a cab that stood at a corner, mentioned a well-known hotel to the driver, and sank back on the seat, sick, faint and afraid.

XVI

As Father Hanlon was about to write his name on the hotel register he glanced at the last few names just above his own, and in an ecstasy of joy saw among them in the bold hand that he knew so well, "Josiah Danforth." A hurried inquiry from the clerk brought the information that Mr. Danforth had gone out and would not be back until after his lecture that night. Ambrose ordered supper, which he scarcely touched, looked through an evening paper where he saw the advertisement of Danforth's lecture on "Some Higher Aspects of Patriotism," and set out for the hall named in the announcement. He arrived there half an hour ahead of time, and found the great auditorium already so nearly filled that he could only get a place in the second last row of seats. Laying aside his troubles for the time, he looked over the great throng on the floor and in the galleries which ran along three sides of the hall, and yielded himself to the reflections which the striking scene inspired. A crowd always deeply moved him. It conveyed to him some subtle spiritual magnetism. It elevated and thrilled him. It acted upon him as the distant thunder of battle acts upon a charger. He always felt, even when he was merely an indistinguishable unit in such an audience, that he would like to rise before them, pour out his soul in advocacy of some great principle, lead them, control them, consecrate them,

to the ideal for which he pleaded. He felt this now. How he would like to face this multitude from that stage and unlock the flood-gates of his heart! Justice! He would tell them of it, until they would rise up en masse to take the oath of a new knighthood, pledging themselves never to follow any but a just and righteous cause. Injustice! He would sear their souls with words of fire denouncing it, until their latent hatred of wrong, and oppression, and foul dealing, would rise as rises the earth in the irresistible earthquake to bring down every seat of tyranny and every temple of autocracy in irretrievable collapse. He would form in the breasts of these three thousand men and women, a public opinion so pure, so potent, that before the very look of their eyes, the cruel wielders of irresponsible power would run like rats for cover. Oh! to create in the fundamentally good, but constitutionally indolent hearts of men, this flaming love of the Ideal! this invincible resolve to uncover hypocrisy and crush to death every one of its crawling species! Oh! to lift this audience and a thousand other similar audiences from end to end of the country, to their feet, make them raise their right hands to God, and utter the vows of Justice, Purity and Truth! Perhaps he would some day do it. A wild hope lit up his heart at the thought, but it died out in a moment as a meteor in the night. Impossible! Impossible! But how divine a vocation! Miss Wakefield had once suggested a vocation for him

something like this, only now his soaring thought was glorifying and expanding her idea until it shone with a light as far-reaching as the boundaries of the Kingdom of God.

A storm of applause brought him back to earth. He looked up and saw Danforth walking to the front of the stage. With great love the priest looked at his friend. How noble he was, this Unitarian mystic! How full of soul those straightforward eyes! How vast a store of saving and regenerating thought behind that commanding brow! In low tones, which, however, traveled to the farthest parts of the hall, Danforth began his address. There could be no intelligent and high-minded love of country, he said, which did not rest upon an adequate understanding of what one's flag and nation represented in the region of the spirit. Prosperity is good, but man does not live by bread alone. Extensive territory is a desirable possession, but mere bigness has no rank in any category of ethics. Freedom of speech and press is a precious blessing, but it is the condition rather than the achievement of national nobility. Only in the order of the Ideal, only in the realm of spirit may be read the truest and highest message which the shield of our Republic displays to the world. Free individuality, free personality, a free soul; men in love with spiritual freedom; women devoted to the holiest purposes; children indoctrinated with the gospel of the Kingdom of Character — this is America's meaning, this the light from above in

which shines every star and gleams every stripe in our country's banner.

Thoroughly impassioned with the ardor of his theme, Danforth developed the meaning of conscience and the sense of responsibility, showed that in the new patriotism enshrined in this home of liberty, conscience replaced the blind attachments of lesser patriotisms, was the very altar-fire in the temple of our country, the bond of our union, the hope of our progress, the glory of our strength. "America," he cried, "rejects and despises the barbaric courage of conquest, but she calls for, lives by, and consecrates the courage of conscience. If some future historian shall ever write the history of our decline and fall, it will not be because our boundless acres have refused to yield their harvests, or our opulent mines their treasures, but because we have abandoned the integrity of principle and forgotten how to strive and suffer in the sacred cause of conscience."

He then gave a masterly analysis of conscience as the inner oracle and true revelation of Deity, and uttered grave warning with the solemn authority of a prophet against the dangers which threaten to destroy its primacy ordained of God. Conscience in the man of state, in the wealthy classes, in the laborer, in the wife and mother, in the church, he delineated in words of impressive power, words that scorned all fear. He touched upon what he called the "apostolate of conscientious patriotism," the life of service, help for the

weak, assistance for the unfortunate, wise guidance for the immigrant, public movements and outspoken denunciations against subtle treason, organized disturbances of peace and justice, and all hypocrisy and the spirit of disdainful aristocracy. His peroration pictured America as leading mankind into an emancipated and regenerated age, wherein the prayers of our founders should be answered, and our flag the symbol of a race that was disciplined to righteousness, profoundly impressed with the sense of its predestined high vocation, exemplars of spiritual liberty who bent the knee but to Justice, Truth and Love, and to God who is all in all.

It was a great triumph. The impress of the speaker and the speech sank deep into every heart. He had set his audience aglow with moral enthusiasm; he had broken down every sordid barrier that hid the Ideal from their eyes; he had given them a glimpse of the shining stars in the high heaven of the soul of man. Again and again they cheered him. Hundreds rushed to the stage to greet him; but he had gone. The words of almost religious veneration that were upon every lip he had not stayed to hear.

A few minutes later Ambrose entered Danforth's room and affectionately embraced him. "Jo," he said, "your prophet's lips have touched the heavenly fire. That speech was a cry from the unseen. It struck into our souls with the inspiration and authority of Divinity."

"You are too kind, Ambrose," deprecated the minister; "Do you think it did them any good?"

"Any good? Why to-night is the acceptable time, the day of salvation for those people," exclaimed Hanlon, quite beside himself with admiration.

"Sit down, Ambrose, and we'll have a fine talk," said Danforth. "You have not given me a chance to say how surprised and delighted I am to see you."

"Jo," said Hanlon, refusing to change the subject; "tell me how it feels to make a speech like that."

"Well," answered Danforth; "since you insist on talking about the matter, I must say that after the joy of facing an audience such as we had to-night, there comes to me a sense of sorrow. Granted that these people have been momentarily lifted up, what will sustain them? It is not enough to preach ideals; you must give people ways and means of holding fast to them. And just here is where I have doubts about the permanence of my work, or of any other earnest man's work. The individual preaches an ideal; only a system, an organization apparently can conserve it. The mighty strength of the Catholic Church lies precisely in this. Its immemorial history, its vast size, its wealth of saintly traditions, all form an incomparable protection for the spiritual treasure of the Gospel. Men may fall away; prophets and saints may die; but there stands the ancient sys-

tem in which the memory of past prophets and saints is kept forever fresh; and a corporate body that never forgets its old saints will never be without new saints. Ambrose, the more I reflect upon your church, the more amazed I am at its hardly human power and efficiency."

"Did you ever," asked Father Hanlon, "consider it probable that you might become a Catholic?"

"Never," came the instant response. "I have often looked wistfully toward the ancient faith of Christendom, but I think it impossible that I shall ever feel any call of conscience to join it. Its mystical resources, its unparalleled power to cultivate the inner life, make me venerate it. But I can go no farther."

"Let me a little more deeply into your thought," said the priest. "You say that ideals can be perpetuated only by a system. You admit that Catholicism as a conserving system is incomparable, but inadmissible. What system then are we to have?"

"Ah! there is the perplexity," answered Danforth. "Look at the history of spiritual ideals. They begin with some prophet raised up by God. He arouses the conscience and stimulates the aspirations of humanity. He creates a movement and dies. His message will die with him unless an organization incorporates it and enforces it. The third stage comes when the message is largely lost in the organization; and men confuse this organization with the message. The original living

word is then supplanted by outward forms. Exterior conformity takes the place of interior response, and a new prophet must arise. Then a new system succeeds him, and so the process goes. The Old Testament prophets were replaced by the legalistic system of Phariseeism. Jesus rescued the pure truth of God from the mass ritual and law. His word in turn was incorporated in Catholicism. Catholicism in its turn was broken up by the reformers. This is the life-cycle of religion. My hope is this: That spiritual power shall become so strong and pure that humanity will some day enjoy such a succession of prophetic men as will dispense with the necessity of systems of conservation, which sooner or later become systems of destruction. If prophets always lived the organization would not be needed. I am hoping for a time when the school of prophets will never be without great teachers and great pupils. The vocation to prophethood will replace the vocation to priesthood. But the prospect of this is sorrowfully and dreadfully distant."

The two men remained long in thoughtful silence. Danforth finally said: "Ambrose, you are the servant of a mighty religious system. Its corporate power re-enforces your work tenfold. As long as you can honestly interpret its belief in the manner of a liberal Catholic, remain in it, strive to purify it, and adapt it to modern needs. Perhaps after all it may be the old faith that will produce the new race of prophets. Catholicism is so

warm and comforting and massively fraternal! With all my love for Unitarian principles, they seem in comparison lonely and cold."

"Dear friend," said Father Hanlon, "your words find me in a strange mood. I have been rebellious and indignant to-day. Looking upon a personal grievance, I have lost sight of those larger views which you suggest to me. Let me tell you my poor troubles, and give me the benefit of your wise counsel."

Hanlon then recited the incidents of the afternoon. When he had finished Danforth said: "This is very serious. It forebodes, I fear, a persecution of you which will destroy your peace of mind and threaten the integrity of your conscience. You ought, my dear Ambrose, to be prepared for the worst. If such a persecution comes, if any authority attempts to annihilate your usefulness or to subvert your character, your duty is to resist. For no man and no cause can you falsify your conscience. For no man and no cause can you throw away your personality, life and vocation. The development of personality, as so often we have said together, is the supreme end of religion. When any particular form of religion contravenes that end, we must abandon that form, however firmly fastened in our affections it be."

"A hard saying," sighed Ambrose; "but it is the truth of God."

"Come, friend," said Danforth, after a period of silence, taking the priest's arm; "let us look

up from the distracting mystery of earth to the divine peace of heaven." So saying he threw open the window and they gazed up at the stars. The night was clear and the sky was lavishly showing forth its wealth of worlds. Beneath lay the city, wearing a look of tranquillity for all the glare of street lights and the frequent clang of cars.

"Ambrose," said Danforth in a low tone, "cannot this land produce prophets as well as free-men?"

"It has already produced one," answered the priest, laying his hand on the shoulder of his friend. "My highest hope for my country is that she shall bear sons who are able to perpetuate your message."

"It is you, friend," Danforth responded, "that have the really difficult vocation. Providence is shaping your life for suffering. Clear as those stars I see it. When the hour comes, be true to Truth and to the outcast Christ."

A few minutes more they looked out on the night in silence.

"Good night," said Father Hanlon.

"Good night," the minister answered, taking Hanlon's hand, and with their hearts full of unspoken words, they parted.

XVII

The clouds were lifted from Father Hanlon's spirit by the busy preparations for his church dedication. Heretic, rebel, or whatever else the bishop might be pleased to consider him, at least this new building erected and fully paid for in little more than a year, was a proof that he had not been idle, and that his people loved him. It was, therefore with a goodly measure of joy, even with some sense of mild triumph, that he made ready for the ceremony. Perhaps in the good cheer of the occasion, he might after all be fraternally forgiven, and restored to episcopal favor. An uneasy feeling lurked in the farther corner of Ambrose's mind that even if so happy an issue resulted, the future held in waiting, not peace but agitation and calamity. But this dark menace he tried sturdily to repress. *Carpe diem!* Let him keep this day of his own and his people's happiness unmixed with fears and evil omens. Almost blithely, then, and with the frequent lilt of nearly forgotten songs upon his lips, he set about the business before him. One stern task he resolved, however, to accomplish as soon as the ceremony was at an end. He would approach Dooran and demand an explanation of his cowardly letter. Dooran would be present at the dedication, there was little doubt of that; for he rarely missed an episcopal function. And the interview that would take place Ambrose took a grim pleasure in antici-

pating. It would be an interview that Dooran would not soon forget. Had he known of Dooran's coming promotion to the coadjutorship of the diocese, his expectations would doubtless have been of different temper.

There were a thousand details to look after in connection with the dedication. The poor little rustics of altar-boys had to be drilled in the complex manœuvres of an episcopal mass; singers must be procured from other parishes to augment his own scanty and uncertain choir; every element and instrument of the approaching function must be provided and in its proper place; — the ewer and basin for washing the bishop's hands, the holy water vessel and sprinkler, the candlestick and candle to be held beside the missal while the right reverend functionary read or sang the prayers; no end of the things to be thought of and made ready. One detail Ambrose reflected on with some anxiety. Would the bishop put on his vestments privately in the sacristy, or would he, as indeed the ceremonial directed, vest in presence of the people, taking the various sacred garments from the altar? An odd sight, this public vesting of a bishop! While the great man sits facing the people, a priest takes off the shoes of his lordship and puts upon his feet the embroidered slippers of a color corresponding to the church-feast of the day, white, red or purple, as the case may be. Then the bishop thrusts himself into several tunics one after the other, the attending priests all the

while serving as his flunkys. The outer chasuble is at last cast over him, gloves are drawn upon his hands, the fantastic mitre placed on his head, the gilded staff given into his left hand, and like some Oriental potentate, the successor of the Apostles begins his regal procession to the foot of the altar to confess himself a sinner.

Ambrose heartily hoped that Bishop Shyrne would do all this clothing of himself in the privacy of the sacristy. Many non-Catholics, friends of the young pastor, and through him benevolently disposed towards the Catholic Church, would be present, and if they were to see all this fussing and fixing they would be sorely perplexed, and some of them doubtless irreverently amused. Ambrose thought of this until he became quite horrified at the possibilities of the situation. He was highly sensitive to ridicule; yet he was to be master of ceremonies and would be the chief flunkey in the business of robing and disrobing the bishop. Would his non-Catholic friends not think him ludicrous? How could he explain to them the far-fetched symbolism of the affair? Slight as the vexation was in itself, he became greatly concerned about it and resolved to ask the bishop to vest in the sacristy.

Last but not least of the preparations was the dinner. Ambrose impressed upon the mind of Nahum Cuttle that Axton Hotel must outdo itself. Nahum, a New Englander to the heart's core, was not easily excited, but excited he became as his

young clerical guest enlarged upon the magnitude of the event and the extent to which the reputation of Nahum and of Axton would on that day be forever enhanced or lost. Covers were to be laid for fifteen, and in order that an aristocratic service be furnished, a chef and two negro waiters were to be brought from the city. The plans for both the secular and the sacred features of the celebration were at last perfected, and Father Hanlon sat down to await a momentous day in his life.

The bishop did not arrive on Saturday evening, much to Father Hanlon's chagrin. It was clear that his lordship wished to spend as little time as possible as the guest of the pastor of Axton. Not until ten o'clock on Sunday morning, within half an hour of the time set for the service, did the Right Reverend Sebastian Shyrne put in an appearance. At that hour, when Ambrose had fallen into a fever of anxiety lest he should not come at all, he drove up to the church in Joseph Dooran's carriage, engaged in earnest conversation with that gentleman who sat beside him. Merely nodding to Father Hanlon, he entered the church, and proceeded to make preparations for vesting.

"Bishop," said Ambrose, "may I suggest that you vest in the sacristy?"

"Why do you ask that, sir? Do you not know that it is unrubrical?" was the sharp reply.

"I know it is unrubrical, sir," responded Father Hanlon, a pallor coming into his cheeks; "but many bishops do it, and moreover there is a large

number of Protestants here to-day who would not understand the public exhibition of putting on the vestments, and might be scandalized at it. They are accustomed to a simpler ceremonial."

There was an unpleasant glitter in the bishop's eye as he retorted in a low voice:

"I will not tolerate your heresy much longer, sir. Lead the way to the sanctuary at once."

So the vesting took place before the altar in sight of all; and the simple folk of the Puritan village were vastly amazed at the elaborateness of it. Tears of anger found their way into Father Hanlon's eyes as he assisted the bishop into one garment after another. "Folly and superstition!" he kept saying to himself, and in his soul were great weariness and disgust. He was not helped to a calmer mind by the very evil temper of the chief functionary. "What have you done with my gloves? Give me that crozier and be quick about it! Don't stand there like a fool!" were some of the remarks addressed to him by the bishop, and they stung like a lash. Here he was with a mind emancipated, with a loftier conception of religion than any buried beneath this tawdry symbolism, ordered about and snapped at by this ignorant fellow, so far beneath him in all save the brutal accident of hierarchical authority! It was hard to endure it, but endure it he must or aggravate an already painful situation.

After the gospel had been sung, the bishop preached. He congratulated the people on their

new church; praised their hard work and self-sacrifice, and told them that he was proud to have such Catholics in his diocese. Of the hard work and self-sacrifice of that pale, suffering priest who sat before him, not one word! Of his nobility, of his zeal, of his purity of motive, not a mention! The bishop next launched forth into the subject of faith. We are living in a faithless age, he said. Infidel scholarship, based on pride, and doomed to perdition, has grown up around us and is attacking sacred beliefs that are ages old. The simple faithful must be on the watch. They must know their faith and instantly rise up against any man, whatever his wisdom or his position, who tries to seduce and beguile them from the strict, old-fashioned faith of the apostles. Even if such an insidious teacher appear as an angel of light the people of God must greet him with but one word, Anathema!

After half an hour of this sort of thing, the bishop, with a side glance at the heart-broken man who had been the target of it all, turned to the altar and unctuously intoned the "Credo." During the remainder of the mass Ambrose moved about dazed, heartsick, and in the depths of despair. The door as of a living tomb seemed to be closing in upon him. It was not yet quite shut, however, and a way was still open to an unknown world, but a cold and dark world, from which, notwithstanding, some wild call of freedom fell from the distance on his soul.

At the end of the mass the stately procession filed into the sacristy, and while the half score of visiting priests were moving about in the crowded room divesting themselves of cassock and surplice, the Reverend Joseph Dooran clapped his hands for silence. Then in a loud voice he announced that Bishop Shyrne was to dine at his house within an hour, and cordially invited all the priests present to join the bishop at his table.

"Father Dooran," said Ambrose, in an unsteady voice; "I have made preparations to have the bishop and the priests take dinner with me at the hotel."

"Bishop Shyrne is to be my guest, sir," answered Dooran without looking at Hanlon.

At this moment the bishop himself entered the sacristy. He had been kneeling before the altar for a few moments of prayer. Ambrose turned to him with a very unusual and not a reassuring look upon his face.

"Bishop," he said, "I am expecting you and the visiting clergy to dinner at the hotel."

"I am to dine with Father Dooran, sir, and I expect the reverend gentlemen here to go with me," was the bishop's answer.

"But, bishop, this is not customary. I have gone to considerable trouble and expense to prepare the hotel for your coming."

"Can't help it, sir," replied the bishop, looking far from comfortable as he fondled his pectoral cross. The other priests stood listening in amazement.

"Bishop Shyrne," said Ambrose, in a voice that shook no longer; "this is a public and deliberate insult to me, and I must tell you, sir, that I regard it, and every decent man must regard it, as a contemptible outrage."

"I'll attend to you later, sir. Dooran, call your carriage." With this his lordship swept magnificently out of the sacristy. The priests of course departed immediately after him, and Ambrose was left alone. Leaning upon the vestment-case he buried his face in his hands, and let his bruised heart have its way. He knew not how long he had stayed there when he heard a low voice, saying: "Father Hanlon." He rose and turned a pitiable face to his visitor. It was Dorothy Wakefield. She held out her hand and said: "Dear, dear friend, I will not intrude now. I only want you to know that I understand, and that I suffer with you." Sweet words! Like an ointment with virtue to heal, they fell upon the priest's lacerated heart. He said nothing, he could say nothing, but bent his head and pressed his lips upon her hand.

Late that afternoon Father Hanlon took a train for the city. Not that he had business there, but he wished to be away from Axton until his mind should be composed. Sitting in the car he went over for the twentieth time the incidents of the day. Would the bishop remove him? or suspend him? or possibly even send him away to a monastery to do penance in disgrace? It would be hard to leave Axton now. He loved his people

and they loved him. And how could he live without Josiah Danforth? Ah, what a friend he was! how noble; how exalted; how close to the world unseen! And Dorothy Wakefield? Ambrose felt his troubles falling from his heart at the thought of her. Her face rose up before him and comforted him. He recollected all his meetings with her and reflected longingly on the womanly tenderness of her sympathy, the virile power of her intelligence, the depth and purity of her character, the simplicity and fervor of her religion. She, too, had become a friend, and how beautiful, how precious was that friendship! But — but, what was this disturbing scruple that entered the priest's mind now for the first time? Was this friendship with Dorothy too intimate? Was it dangerous? He had kissed her hand that morning. The remembrance of that action startled him, and the blood flew to his face. Yes, the strict standards of priestly austerity condemned him there. He had chosen loneliness, yea, even loneliness of the heart; he had vowed himself to an uncompromising asceticism; he had bidden eternal farewell to human love. Let him beware of this woman! No man was ever more thoroughly a priest than Ambrose Hanlon. Never in his life had he felt even a temptation to complain of his priestly vow. But as he sat there in that speeding train his soul awoke as it were, and found itself in pain. Not that he was in love. The idea was ridiculous. But the mere thought that a new self-

consciousness, a subtle and suggestive reserve should henceforth underlie his relations with Dorothy; that he must place bounds and barriers to a friendship that had begun to touch his life with tenderness; that he must forbid her too close an acquaintance with his thoughts and troubles — this pained him, and the pain struck deep. For the first time in his life he recognized that his youthful vow was severe and savage, and that the solitude which it made around him was as nothing compared to the loneliness which it created within. If only his faith were as once it was! But this ultimate support now when he most needed it to be strong, was uncertain and weak. His sturdy and uncompromising belief of other days had been shaken seriously,— he could no longer doubt it. Yet he had committed no fault. He had only studied, thought and prayed. His desolate heart had almost refused to go whither the imperious intellect pointed the way; and not till Conscience took the whip in its hand, had he set forth upon the sorrowful journey. What would be the outcome? The answer to that question was in darkness indeed. The young priest closed his eyes. His tired soul turned to his Master. "Jesus," he prayed, "across the ages I send my cry to thee. O Sovereign of human hearts! From thy throne of kingship in the world of spirits, look on me thy consecrated, who desire to love thee and to live for thee." The aspiration uttered, his sorrow took an upward look, and within his soul he felt some faint flutterings of peace.

Father Hanlon's setting out for the city had been quite aimless, but having arrived there, he determined to attend evening service in a Unitarian church. So it happened that for the first time in his life he sat in the pew of a Protestant conventicle. Two motives had led him there. In the first place he was seeking a spiritual message that might bring strength and consolation to his troubled heart. He was in no mood for symbolism and ceremonial; nor cared he aught just then for venerable signs and ancient usages. With still greater reluctance did he shrink from controversy and the spirit of sect. His desire was for an hour of simple worship such as the twelve must have enjoyed who walked with Jesus and gathered about him in the fields by day or beneath the stars at night to speak their lowly prayer and lift their humble hymn to the Father of all. This simplicity of form and this immediateness of access to God Ambrose felt he could best find among the Unitarians. He had no scruples now in taking part in heretical worship. "*Nulla communicatio cum hereticis in divinis*," was a thundering axiom that had lost its terrors. Whoever bowed before the Most High, whoever strove to learn the spirit of Christ, was his brother in the spiritual universe; and brotherhood, he believed, was higher and holier than the antipathies of sects and the arrogance of theologies.

In the second place, he had come to regard the Unitarian fellowship with admiration, even with

longing. Its principles of ministering to the soul while permitting perfect freedom to the mind, was naturally attractive to a man who had grown restive beneath an iron orthodoxy which made itself the despot of intellect and the foe of scholarship. He could not fail, indeed, to recognize the limitations of Unitarianism. It was a church of the few; and he feared that one of the reasons of its remaining so was that it lacked the apostolic spirit, and that its devotional life was thin and poor. Still, there was Josiah Danforth! There was Dorothy Wakefield! More earnest, more prayerful souls, than these two friends of his did not exist. And if they found this form of faith sufficient it could not be destitute of grace and power to sanctify and inspire. Summing the matter up Hanlon found that Unitarianism fell in congenially with the state of mind that was growing upon him, and was inclined to think that some such form of religion was destined to be the final step in the evolution of Christianity.

He joined in the beautiful and simple hymn with which the service began. A prayer followed, spoken by the venerable pastor emeritus of the church, a man who must have been nearly ninety, but of whose countenance not all the ravages of age impaired the kindness, tranquillity and purity. His prayer moved Ambrose to the heart. It led him straight into the presence of the Father of Spirits. It sounded like an echo of the prayer of Christ. It lifted him into the abode of the Eterni-

ties, and left him at the feet of the world's Consoler. A quartet next sang the Lord's Prayer. As the voices rolled out in full volume at the end, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory," Ambrose confessed that this doxology, textually inauthentic as he knew it to be, was worthy to be joined to the immortal words of worship that precede it. After another hymn came the sermon, delivered by the young assistant pastor of the church. Such a sermon as it was! The young man began with announcing as his text a paragraph from Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Biology*, adding as a companion text a page of Firdousi. Then thrusting his right hand into his trousers' pocket, off he went into a deplorable declamation. The idea of God was his subject, and his purpose seemed to be to destroy every idea of God that was worth anything for religion. God is the formless, vital principle of the universe, he said. God is the name we give to that unknowable hidden life that throbs in sea and sky and star. Creation is an absurdity; the universe is eternal. This the great evolutionary philosophers, and especially Herbert Spencer, have irrefutably proved. Thus this strange caricature of a sermon ran on. Whatever other ideas it may have left in the minds of those who heard it, the very last idea it could be accused of depositing there was any worshipful or devout idea of God. The tone in which it was delivered was even more exasperating than its contents. Herbert Spencer was spoken

of as the lord of earthly wisdom, whose philosophy it would be primitive barbarism to gainsay. The "old" idea of God was flung out of court with an infallibility of assurance that no pope could pretend to equal. Belligerence, scorn, intolerant finality — of all this there was abundance; but for the soul, for piety, not a word. Add to this the young man's flagrant offences against logic, as when he argued that because the universe was big, therefore, it was infinite; and because it was old, therefore, eternal — and we may be able to understand Ambrose's disappointment and distress.

Deeper in depression than ever, lonelier than ever, Father Hanlon entered his room at midnight, where he knew that not sleep, but continued conflict awaited him.


XVIII

On the very Sunday of Ambrose Hanlon's untoward experience of advanced liberalism, Josiah Danforth's pulpit was occupied by a Reverend Mr. Snodgrass. Danforth was detained by a lecture in a town fifty miles distant and he asked this young minister, of whom he knew little or nothing, to supply his place in Axton. Mr. Snodgrass' sermon threw the congregation into a violent controversy. It declared in substance that the gods of nations and religions were little more than an idealization of what the subjects of these deities conceived to be good and great. One after another of the divinities thus made to man's image and likeness passed away before the rising sun of science; one after another, however fervently worshipped and magnanimously trusted, descended into the grave along with the civilizations which had produced them. The lesson of this sorrowful religious history of the race is that we must cease to scan the distant sky, must forego our vain building of Jacob's ladders, and confess that the ultimate, the world-ground, is totally beyond the reach of mind or heart. True, we shall always have ideals, shall never be without hopes, affections and aspirations that go beyond ourselves; but for these outgoing impulses of the soul we must build a home on earth, nor trust too much that they shall find mansions in heaven. Do the daily task, strive to be unselfish; and for the rest

try to be reconciled to darkness and unsolved mystery forever.

When Danforth reached home next day, Dorothy gave him an account of this sermon with indignation and outraged feeling in every word. "Must we admit," she asked him, "that the church we have so loved has no message for human souls, except that we must be polite and kind and keep out of jail? Has it no living conviction that the soul's desires are destined for immortal fruition? If so, let us become Catholics at once; for whatever else the Roman church may be, she at least is a teacher of God and of a soul that was made for God."

Sighing sadly Danforth answered: "There is much to discourage us in the drift of things. Not that I have the smallest doubt of the survival of true religion. That will not die till the heart of the last noble man and pure woman ceases to beat. But we seem to be entering a tunnel in the life-journey of the race. We are in all probability facing an era of desolation, wherein many will be born, will live and die, blind, deaf and dumb for want of a prophet, a Messiah, to unstop the avenues of their souls." He paused, and when he resumed he seemed to be communing with his own soul. "The people are not at fault; human nature has not lost its Godward impulse. But the school of prophets is vacant. Men are setting themselves up as spiritual leaders, to whom the spirit's interior struggles, agonies and triumphs are unknown."



Danforth was still pondering the problem suggested by Dorothy when Hanlon visited him that evening. The priest at once proceeded to tell his friend about the sermon whereof Herbert Spencer furnished the text. "I was bitterly disappointed, Jo," he concluded; "because I have grown to regard the Unitarian brotherhood of Christ's disciples as a sort of home for my soul. Your spiritual literature is so beautiful; your traditional reverence for the heart's free converse with its Maker so appealing, that I was fain to think that your form of Christianity would become the last and highest home of faith. But if your leaders fight against the soul of man, they and their cause are lost."

"Ambrose," said the minister; "any religion is lost that does not produce saints. The main trouble is that our spiritual life is low. We are losing the mystical sense. We have preachers many, but apostles few. Our Unitarian principles are eternally true. I am convinced of that, and I think you are, to a greater degree than you imagine. But of what good is a mere foundation, if the structure of vitality is not there? Given our principles and traditions; add to them spiritual insight, exalted heroism and invincible perseverance, and our faith will win the world. Strike from our souls the bondage of conventionality; put into our blood a passion for humanity, and a thirst for the living God — and who can withstand us? My brother, I feel the sense of a divine vocation

approaching upon my inmost soul. Vague and formless yet, it will become clear; and I am eager to see it and to live for it. In a general way it is to make the Christ-appeal to modern men. It is turning the light of Christ's divine spirit upon the sufferings, the shams and the brutalities of modern society. It will begin with the soul within. Unless that is right, vain are our dreams of reform, our efforts of philanthropy. But it will go out from the soul into the social and political life of our time; it will attempt a transformation of society based on individual righteousness." With the faintest trace of a smile, he added: "If you think me dreaming, acknowledge at all events that the dream is holy." His features setting into an almost sombre gravity again, he concluded: "Would that you and I might work hand in hand to make the dream come true!"

"Jo," said the priest with bowed head, "I fear I must confess that I am afraid of Calvary."

"Our brother of Galilee," answered Danforth, "shrank from it, too. Yes, even He. But in the supreme hour He conquered the mob, the priesthood and their tortures, and now He rules us from the cross."

After a moment's silence Danforth said with a smile: "By the way, Ambrose, this information that you have given me, and similar information that I have received about a brother-minister of mine named Snodgrass, are in the highest degree opportune. I am to address the students for the

Unitarian ministry at H—— University next week, and I fancy my few remarks will be seasoned with less honey than hot peppers. One of the professors there, a leader, by the way, in this apostasy from our traditions and from the spirit of worship, thinks harshly of me already. I'm vulgar, he says; a camp-meeting revivalist, and all that sort of thing. But just wait until he hears me scream next week, and I'll bet he'll ring in a police alarm. Ambrose, my boy, don't you enjoy a fight?"

Danforth was a boy again, and his face glowed at the thought of conflict. Hanlon smiled at this sudden but characteristic turn of his friend's thought, and said:


"Well, Jo, I am full of Celtic blood and I am the son of a soldier; but I have been 'sickled o'er with the pale cast of thought' lately. It does me good to see you with a chip on your shoulder."

"The pale cast of thought, if flushed now and then with the red glow of righteous combativeness, will win this world for God and God-like humanity," cried Danforth; "but one without the other makes a man a weakling or a fanatic. Ambrose, let's take for our colors pale flesh-color and blood-red!"

"I'm off to buy my war-paint," laughed Hanlon, picking up his hat. "Good luck to your speech, Jo!"

Josiah Danforth's speech to the young candidates for the ministry quite fulfilled his prediction. It was highly seasoned with hot peppers. The

gist of it was, they were not sufficiently praying and wrestling with the problems of the spirit. Experience was the world's greatest teacher, he told them. And shall experience in the highest possible category of phenomena — the phenomena of soul-growth — be disregarded by men who are to give utterance to Christ's thought, Christ's love, Christ's heart? "How can you dare," he demanded, "speak for Him who consumed His midnight hours in solemn meditation, who wore Himself pale and thin in constant pondering of eternal verities, if you starve yourself upon life's shallow respectabilities, if you imagine that a merely decorous behaviour and an ability to turn a graceful sentence constitute a prophet and an apostle? Of old God's messengers had to possess hearts of fire and souls of mystics; now it appears that a few solemn pedantries — philosophy, philology and exegesis — are enough." He told them of the glorious possibilities open to their pure and simple interpretation of Christ's religion, and in words that throbbed with indignation he laid before them the increasing signs that these possibilities were not to be realized. His last words were: "Back to Jesus and Forward with Jesus! Look to the divine Hero, who, through His discipline of pain and darkness spoke words that still echo in the heart of humanity. Pray with Him beneath the stars, meditate with Him by the lonely lake, lie prostrate with Him in Gethsemane; yes, and if the hour comes, die with him at the hands of a brutal



mob. And if you are not prepared to do this, leave this place of preparation, and defile not the office of the Lord's apostle with infidelity, time-serving and sloth."

When he finished, the students thronged about him. "This is the birthday of my soul," said one. "Mr. Danforth, in humiliating me, you have made a man of me," said another. "You delivered a message that is sadly needed in this house," put in a third. The professors congratulated him, too, but less heartily, with the exception of the gentleman of whom Danforth spoke to Hanlon. This man left the room without a word to Danforth, and went straightway to his rooms, not to ring in a police alarm, but to write a letter to Squire Wakefield, bitterly censuring the fanatical pastor of Axton. The Squire was one of the most generous friends of the theological school, and the hostile professor thought he ought to be informed as to the sort of man the Axton congregation was supporting. We need not describe the joy with which the Squire received this communication. He took from his pocket a note-book which bore the heading: "Complaints against the Reverend Josiah Danforth," and carefully wrote therein the professor's gravamina. Squire Wakefield was going about his campaign systematically.

XIX

About the middle of January Father Hanlon received from the bishop's office two letters that we must mention in this history of his life and growth. The first was a printed card with the information that Father Joseph Dooran had received the Holy See's appointment as coadjutor bishop of the diocese with the right of succession. The second contained a small printed pamphlet and a page of type-written matter. This latter document, signed by the bishop's secretary, reminded Hanlon that the semi-annual conference of the diocesan clergy for the discussion of theological problems would be held on the following Wednesday, and conveyed to him Bishop Shyrne's especial command to be present. The accompanying pamphlet contained an outline of the subject to be debated at the conference. That a bishop should send a personal order to a priest to attend a conference of this kind, is an unusual proceeding; but when Hanlon glanced at the question to be treated he quite understood the action of the Right Reverend Shyrne. This question was: "The Reading of Prohibited Books." "The priests will be expected," so read the circular, "to explain and defend the decrees and condemnations of the Roman Index from the standpoint both of dogmatic theology and of the practical usage of the confessor." Hanlon smiled as he first read these announcements; but as he reflected further,

his face became troubled. Could he attend the conference merely as an auditor, it would be simple enough. He could endure the solemn discussions of his conservative confrères with more or less equanimity. But he was practically certain that the bishop would call upon him to give his opinion on some aspect of the case so cleverly put that he must either dissemble or speak out his mind and possibly bring on the crisis that he had long been fearing. Closing his eyes, the priest, with a strange sense of being both victim and victor, began picturing to himself the possible events of the conference. In the presence of two hundred priests the bishop would call upon him to declare his interpretation of the binding force of the Roman Index. He saw himself rising to respond. His imagination brought before him with startling vividness his own white, stern face, the living words that would leap from his lips in defence of that which it is a crime to coerce — Truth and the Truth-seeking mind of man. Emancipation for the human spirit; the impossibility of maintaining intellectual despotism at an age when every other despotism is dead; the self-vindicating power of science over every vagary and all inevitable but transient errors; an appeal to Roman churchmen to cease their insane hostility to modern civilization! — this would be his answer to the frowning bishop in the chair before him and to those greater bishops in the Vatican who would fain make it a matter of their good pleasure whether intellect

shall live or die. In the ardor of his fancy Hanlon bounded from his chair and walked the room with the words of his great defiance pouring from his lips. In another minute he was soberly smiling at his impetuosity, and he resumed his meditations in a more practical frame of mind.

No matter what the snare the bishop laid for him he would not lie. During these past few months of incessant study the scientific conscience had been growing within him steadily, and had given him a conception of Truth's unspeakable holiness and supreme authority such as he had never derived from either his course in theology or the fervors of his early piety. It was hardly a question of volition any longer. He could as soon jump to the moon as deliberately lie. There was almost a physical impossibility in the way. Truth was Deity in the category of intellect; and to prefer before that Deity the good will of Sebastian Shyrne or the comfort of Ambrose Hanlon, was a thing that could find no lodging in his mind or will. The very power of temptation had gone from falsehood. What a gain that was! "Thanks to Thee for that, O God," he murmured. The sentiment and the prayer were sincere. But he had still to learn, poor youth, the full power of the temptation to be untrue.

Well, then, he would speak frankly on this business of the Index. If so there was some likelihood that the following Wednesday night would find him a dishonored, disgraced and suspended priest. He

had been suspended already, and he still bore that pain in his heart. But that was a private matter. No one knew of it, so far as he could tell, except the bishop, Danforth, and himself. He had not told even brave little Margaret, his sister, to whom he often confided secrets which he withheld from his mother. And besides, the suspension had been for only a few days. But now staring him in the face was public and notorious degradation. Would not his mother die when she heard of it. Mother! Ah, how much more strongly was he bound to his present life by her and Margaret, by his love for them, by his uttermost care not to hurt them, than he was by the sadly ravelled strands of theological orthodoxy! What if he, son and brother, were about to break their hearts! beyond all healing? Margaret's heart, he reflected, would not break. She would fling herself into the arms of the Ambrose she worshipped and would follow him, if so it must be, even into that outer darkness — that outer darkness into which of late he often found himself peering with strained and frightened eyes.

Perhaps the bishop would send him to a monastery to do penance for the rest of his life! Horrible fate! Again, Ambrose's imagination set to work drawing pictures. Here he is in this Trappist death-hole, a prisoner for life. He approaches the harsh Abbot for permission to read a book or two. "Begone, apostate! No more books for you but the breviary, until by penance you regain the faith which pride of intellect has

taken from you." His career is at an end. His mind is doomed to death. And at last Ambrose Hanlon in the body, renegade and heretic, is dead. There he lies in that unkempt corner of the Trappist cemetery. Shudder, you who have heard of him, and pass on!

"Heavens, this is unhealthy!" he cried leaping to his feet again, a look of terror on his face which did not wholly disappear until he had been plunged for some minutes into a dust-covered volume of Moral Theology — the volume that treats of censures and condemnations. "I'm forgetting this department of science," he remarked with a grim smile as he turned a page. Reading on, he came upon the grave discussion of the doctors of the law as to how much of a prohibited book has to be read before one should commit a mortal sin — some holding that nothing less than reading a full chapter would involve the loss of one's soul; others, Liguori among them, maintaining that to peruse even a page would deserve eternal hell. At this Ambrose flung the book away from him as though a snake had lifted its head from the leaves, and whipping out in a bitter tone: "What putrid stuff!" he fell to thinking again.

After all, suppose the bishop would order him to a monastery, would he go? The alternative was — that outer darkness! Of a sudden the priest felt defiance and bitterness receding from him, and into his whole being surged the idea, hallowed by centuries of piety, masterful with the

traditions of ages of authority, the idea of Priesthood, of Consecration. In majesty it demanded his submission. He was a priest; he had sworn his vow; he was consecrated according to the order of Melchisedech forever — in aeternum, in aeternum, forever, forever. It seemed as though the unnumbered host of priests from the beginning, as though nearly twenty centuries of sacrifice, as though the imperial Church, world-wide and in wisdom world-old, had found a voice — a voice of what august, what overwhelming potency — and that voice spoke within his heart and said: "In the name of ages; in the name of Jesus; in the name of Almighty God, Submit! Submit! Suffer if need be! Die! Be dishonored! But surrender your priesthood never!" Overcome by the sublimity, the intimateness, of this tragic and tremendous interior experience, Father Hanlon fell upon his knees and in a storm of emotion which left no one can say how much free exercise of will, he cried: "I will submit. I am a priest forever; O, Christ, forever."

XX

It was within five minutes of the time the exercises were to begin that Father Hanlon entered the conference-hall. His coming was not noticed, and quite unobserved he dropped into a seat near the door. The two hundred priests present were too much occupied just then to advert to him, being gathered in a dense group about the future bishop of the diocese, the Reverend Joseph Dooran, upon whose predestined head congratulations were pouring by the score. "The best possible choice the diocese could have made;" "I foresaw this from your seminary days;" "the Holy Ghost has made no mistake this time," were some of the expressions of felicitation that Father Hanlon could distinguish as he sat silent and aloof. If the slightest suspicion of a cynical smile came upon his face it was gone in a moment, and his eyes closed as if in profound thought or prayer.

A hush fell upon the noisy group as Bishop Shyrne, looking in the best possible humor, stepped on the platform. His lordship surveyed his priests with beaming face and said: "Father Dooran, I think it is time for you to begin to take that place of precedence which will soon be canonically conferred on you. Please sit beside me on the platform." The hand-clapping was tremendous as the coadjutor-designate rose to comply with this invitation, and it was not until three robust cheers had been given that the applause sub-


sided. "It seems to me," remarked the bishop, "that so striking an expression of good will calls for some acknowledgment. Father Dooran, before we proceed to our discussion of theology, will you favor us with a few words?" Dooran stepped forward, greatly agitated, and said in a very unimpressive manner: "Gentlemen, fellow-priests, I am very grateful. Bishop Shyrne, to you above all I am grateful. I will make it my life's greatest endeavor, if it be the will of Providence that I survive you, to conduct the diocese in the way that you have shown us. Above all, I will try to imitate you in your zeal for the purity of the faith, and in your hatred for heresy; especially that subtle heresy which sometimes lurks within the sanctuary itself. If in the exercise of this duty severity be called for, I promise you I shall be severe. I heartily agree with you, Right Reverend Bishop, that among our priests we want no higher critics, no readers or purveyors of so-called scientific books, which —" here a sudden pallor swept across the speaker's face, and his voice fell so low that the conclusion of the sentence was lost in a thick, hardly articulate utterance. "Gentlemen, again I thank you. This is the proudest moment of my life. God bless you."

"What is the meaning of that break of his?" whispered a priest to his neighbor.

"Oh! he's excited, I suppose," was the answer. "Dooran is a dumb ox anyhow. Fifty men in the diocese have more brains than he will ever have."

Whatever the truth in this latter compliment, it was not lack of brains that brought Joseph Dooran's little speech to an inglorious conclusion. He had caught sight of a priest sitting in the rear of the hall apart from the others — a priest whose face was pale and thoughtful; whose eyes gazed steadily at the floor. Not for an instant were those eyes lifted; not for one second did that pale face express hatred, contempt or pity. Yet it was the sight of this man, motionless, impassive, that had brought confusion to Joseph Dooran.

Bishop Shyrne then opened the conference proper with a short address on the importance of the matter about to be discussed, the reading of prohibited books. He reminded the priests that this was no merely academic question, but an intensely practical one. Every confessor had many occasions of dealing with it; for the reading of books that had been placed on the Index was growing alarmingly in this liberal age. Upon bishops and priests devolved the duty of checking this great evil. Upon their conscience it rested to enforce the laws of the Index rigidly. Especially books written by the higher critics must be snatched from the hands of the faithful, must be rigorously kept from seminaries, and must be excluded from the libraries of priests themselves. "Woe to us," he concluded, "if we desert the ancient master, Thomas Aquinas, to follow after Hermann-A-A-Albert Harnack." Great applause from his loyal priests!



His speech at an end, the bishop began asking questions of the priests quite in the manner of a classroom. First he requested one of them to give him an historical sketch of the Roman Congregation of the Index. The response to this question, delivered by an Irish pastor who had scarcely read a book since he left All Hallows, was lame, stumbling and incoherent. The old gentleman declared that the authority of the Index was based on the text: "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out;" maintained that we know from theological fitness and the analogy of faith that the apostles themselves exercised censorship; and asserted finally that the perfection of Index legislation was brought about by the blasphemies scattered broadcast at the time of the Reformation.

"Very good," commented the bishop. "You make a novel and excellent point in bringing forward that text of Our Lord's. We can hardly doubt that Christ had in mind in uttering those words the scandal that would be caused in the world by evil books. There is, however, another text of the gospel which bears still more directly on the matter. Do you recall it, Father?"

The Father could not recall it.

"Whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven," quoted his lordship. "Surely, that gives us immediately a foundation for such tribunals as the Index."

At this triumphant exegesis only one man smiled, and the smile could not be called a pleasant one.

"Now then," continued the bishop; "let us hear Father Wilkinson."

Father Wilkinson, a convert from the Episcopalian ministry, stood up to answer the question: Does the Index restrain scholarship and liberty of research?

"I will reply by making a distinction," Father Wilkinson began. "Does the Index check licentiousness of thought? Yes. Does it check true Christian liberty? No. Outside the church we see a very riot of opinions. Owing to the abominable recklessness of critics and would-be scholars the most fundamental articles of Christian faith are denied. Even in Anglicanism, that paltry sect that imagines itself to be the custodian of primitive Christianity, there are men in high ecclesiastical offices who are abreast with German infidels in their sacrilegious denials. Obviously there ought to be some tribunal to-day to say to man's proud intellect: 'Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.' It is the glory of the church to possess such a tribunal. And in answer to the charge that the Index is a drag upon scholarship, we have only to point to incomparable names like Augustine, Aquinas, Suarez and Bellarmine."

"Well done, Father," was the bishop's compliment. "Surely it is a triumphant refutation when we can place Thomas Aquinas over against Her — A-A-Alexander Harnack; when we can balance Suarez with-with-er-er-any other man of Harnack's school." Again that smile, half contemptuous, half defiant, on a certain pallid face.

So the conference continued, while such questions were discussed as: Does the Index bind even scholars? Does the Index-law hold in America? Must confessors enforce the Index? and many others, to all which answers of the most stringent orthodoxy were given; answers which, if the world adopted them, would destroy a good half of the laborious scholarship of two centuries. During this exhibition of militant obscurantism Ambrose Hanlon had sat silent, his soul tried sorely, but hoping he would not be called upon and that he might be allowed to depart in what peace he might. But Bishop Shyrne was not a man to allow a victim fallen opportunely into his hands, to escape unscathed. "Father Hanlon," he called, in a tone in which there was little benevolence, hardly courtesy indeed.

Ambrose rose, looking somewhat agitated, and gazed straight into his lordship's eyes.

"Father Hanlon," said the bishop, "how would you answer a man who maintained that however justified in principle the Index is, it has been in practice over-severe, and has in point of fact been a discouragement to scholarship?"

"I should find it very difficult to answer him," was the response, in a clear, steady voice. Ambrose was master of himself now, and perceived within himself the old joy in intellectual combat in which he had delighted in his seminary days.

"Do you mean that you would admit the charge?"

"To a great extent, yes."

The priests, almost to a man, turned to look at the individual to whom these daring admissions came so readily.

"You are a fine type of controversialist," was the bishop's sarcastic comment. "Have you ever read a Catholic apologist who conceded in this manner the accusations of heretics?"

"Never," came the answer; "but every honest man must regard truth as superior to the cheap exigencies of controversy; and this charge seems to me to be true."

"Do you regard the defense and good name of the Church a cheap exigency of controversy?"

"No good name needs to be defended with falsehood, sir." There was a suspicion of defiance in the words. Ambrose felt it, and resolved to check his rising temper.

"So you think," went on the bishop, controlling himself with evident effort; "that the Index has been tyrannical in its prohibitions. How do you fancy the cardinals who compose that Congregation, or the Pope himself, would take such an admission from a priest sworn to defend the Church? How do you imagine I, your bishop, ought to take it?"

"I have answered according to my conscience, sir; all other tribunals are inferior to that."

"You had better beware, sir, how you set up your conscience, as you call it, against the divine authority of the Church." The bishop, highly ex-

asperated, glared savagely at Ambrose, who made no reply. After a painful pause the bishop resumed his questioning.

"Now, sir, as a man so devoted, so devoted, to truth, you must have reasons, you must have facts, for the disorderly opinion which you have just expressed. Give us the facts. Why do you hold that the Index has been excessively severe and unjust?"

"The Index and the Inquisition, kindred Congregations," Ambrose answered in a voice from which all trace of nervousness had disappeared; "began their history with solemnly deciding that the revolution of the earth round the sun was downright formal heresy. Even before that, the fourth of the ten rules laid down for the Index by the Council of Trent practically prohibited the reading of the Bible by Catholics; inasmuch as it required the written permission of the bishop in order that the laity might read the Scriptures in the vernacular. In Italy for one hundred and fifty years the vernacular Bible was absolutely closed to the people; and when, stung by the shame of such a situation, a zealous priest translated the almost forgotten book, he was harried and hounded to desperation by ecclesiastics in high places. While the Pope's temporal power still flourished, the Index was carried out to the full within the Papal states, with the result that no country in Europe, hardly even Turkey, was in such a condition of intellectual stagnation as the pontifical

dominions. To-day Catholic scholarship in the field of biblical criticism, the history of dogma, and the comparative study of religion, has sunk to a humiliating depth. I could name for you, sir, half a score of Catholic scholars, all priests, who have locked within their desks manuscripts which they have either been forbidden, or are afraid to publish. Every Catholic student of the sciences which I have mentioned — sciences which are to-day the battle-ground whereon Christianity is fighting for its very life — is choked to intellectual death by the fatal grip of the Index. The result is that we are and long have been as dumb dogs before the assaults of the critics. When Voltaire and the encyclopedists hurled their attacks at Christianity a hundred years ago, they met no Catholic foemen of anything like equal ability. When Renan wrote his life of Christ fifty years ago the Catholic Church could bring forward no scholar to combat him with any hope of success. And to-day when the very students in our high schools know something of the momentous criticism of Christian origins which is proceeding from German, English and American universities, the Catholic Church forbids even her priests to read the works of these scholars, and seems to have no other defense than a futile syllabus against Liberalism. Not that there are no Catholic scholars. There is a respectable number. But the Index, and the heresy-hunting mania of which the Index is a type, either close their lips before they can speak at all,

or ex-communicate them if they do speak. With these facts, sir, which are as solid as granite, I hold and must hold, as did many of the bishops of the Vatican Council, that the history of the Index carries a huge burden of shame and disaster; and that intellectual repression must cease in the Catholic Church, if the Church in this modern age is not to die."

The amazement of Father Hanlon's audience at this astounding speech is hardly to be described. The priests looked at one another with questioning wonder on their faces as though they doubted the report of their own ears. Then they looked at Hanlon, who stood in his place calm enough indeed, but with a masterful air about him, like a man who had done his duty and feared not. Next they looked at the bishop. Into his lordship's cheeks had burned two bright red spots; into his lordship's eyes had come two flames of living anger; upon his lordship's features had been stamped an aspect that was hard and merciless and bitter.

For half a minute after Ambrose finished, there was silence, forced, tense silence. Then from some part of the hall sounded a soft clapping of hands.

"Silence!" screamed the bishop. "If I knew the man that applauded those monstrous sentiments, I would suspend him on the spot. As for you, sir,—" Ambrose was not the only one whose cheek grew pale at the sight and voice, for it was pitifully evident that Shyrne was quite beside him—

self. "As for you, sir, who have dared to insult your bishop with the infamous falsehoods that you have uttered against the Church of God, I declare that you have the mind of a heretic, the animus of a heretic; and the world knows that when a priest is perverted to heresy, impurity is the cause of it, a woman is the reason for it."

Ambrose recoiled from the foul charge as though a fist mailed in iron had struck his face. Impurity! A woman! He who was so priestly and so pure; he into whose mind nothing defiled could find entrance; he whose passion was righteousness, whose religion was the following of Truth and Christ; he, held up before two hundred priests by his own bishop as a licentious scoundrel! Shame and anger drove a crimson tide into his cheeks and throbbing temples; the place grew dark before his eyes; through his heart shot a pain as from a knife thrust to the hilt. Saying no word, he turned and with unsteady step left the hall.

That night the door-bell of Josiah Danforth's house rang at an unusual hour for visitors. When the minister answered the summons, Father Hanlon stood before him.

"Jo," he asked; "am I in time for family prayer?"

That some disaster had happened was clear from his voice and manner. Danforth refrained from questions and said: "Just in time, Ambrose; mother has this minute called me."

"Let me join you," said the priest. "I am upset. Terrible things, ugly, dangerous things,

have been leaping through my mind, and I fear them. Let me try to find God again in this house."

"Friend Ambrose," began Mrs. Danforth's greeting; — but there she stopped at sight of the unutterable misery on the young priest's face. Dorothy Wakefield, too, checked her welcome and turned pale. Ambrose spoke some conventional word scarcely audible and Danforth said: "Now mother, let us begin our prayer."

They knelt down. Father Hanlon covered his face with his hands. Mr. Danforth knelt close, very close to him. The Quaker mother opened the sacred page. "And the high priest arose and said unto Him: Answerest thou nothing? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto Him: I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him: Thou hast said. Nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying: he hath spoken blasphemy. What further need have we of witnesses; behold now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered: He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face and buffeted Him and others smote Him with the palms of their hands." The sweet voice ceased and silence fell. Never in that house of prayer had there been a more profound and moving meditation.

For twenty minutes there was no sound. Then Mrs. Danforth placed the Bible before her son. In a tone that thrilled with unusual emotion, he read these two verses: "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. These things have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." A minute's further silence followed, and Dorothy began the Lord's Prayer, in which all joined. At the end they stood up with grave but happier faces.

"You have helped me, even blessed me this night," said Father Hanlon; "and I thank you from my heart."

"It is the divine Spirit that has blessed and will bless thee, my son," said the aged Quakeress, taking his hand.

"Dear Father Hanlon, you have helped us, too. How great a blessing that we can bring our sorrows here to be aided in bearing them by God and one another. Sorrow so highly favored must be intended for some noble and divine purpose." It was Dorothy who spoke the gracious words; and the priest's eyes as they turned to her, showed plainly the gratitude of his bruised heart.

XXI

Neither suspension nor removal from Axton followed as a penalty for Ambrose's outspokenness at the conference. The bishop evidently had perceived on returning to a calmer mind that his dishonorable insinuation against the young priest was a tactical blunder and that he could not afford for the time being to add injury to insult. But a crisis was so clearly inevitable that Ambrose derived but little comfort from his temporary tranquillity. Tranquillity indeed he could hardly be said to be enjoying. The storm was so near and so terrible that his happiest hours were clouded with the foreboding of it. Even were there no trouble with his bishop, he was now feeling more and more the pressure of another trouble from a far higher and holier authority. His conscience was in revolt. With the whole administrative side of Catholicism he was more than out of sympathy; he detested it; he hated its tyranny, its secularity, its incompatibility with spiritual freedom. Yet as priest and pastor, yes, by his very dress, he represented before the world everything Catholic, Roman, Papal, from the dogmas of Trent to the decrees of the Inquisition and the Index. Worse than this, he was not subscribing to the Roman creed in the official sense of its formulas. True, he was but following in this the leaders of liberal Catholicism who were forever expressing their horror of separation from the

Church, and vindicating their right to remain in it. But unaffected by their arguments, Father Hanlon's conscience kept putting to him the stern question: Is it honorable? Is it truthful?

One night in his study he took pencil and paper and proceeded to do some spiritual and intellectual book-keeping. Precisely at what points of belief had he arrived? Into what definite condition had his mind and soul settled after these months of experience and study? His accounting of himself was the following:

"What do I think of the present method and temper of ecclesiastical authority? I abhor it as an obstruction in the path of liberty.

"Of the tendencies of modern Catholic devotion? Mischievous. The free growth of the individual spirit hindered by machine-piety. Hence no more great preachers or independent laymen.

"Of the Church's attitude to study? A crime."

Having written this, he laid down his pencil, folded his arms, and gave himself to profound thought. Taking up the pencil again, and looking long and earnestly at the crucifix above his desk, he once more set to writing.

"Do I believe as a reality in the fall of man as theology understands it?

"In baptismal regeneration?

"In the exclusion from heaven of children who die unbaptized?

"In the blood-redemption of Christ as theology understands it?

"In the divinity of Jesus?

"In the Deity of the consecrated bread?

"In the Deity of Jesus?

"That the Deity of Jesus, the Trinity as now understood, the sacrament of penance, and the divine origin of the episcopate as distinct from priesthood, were believed by the primitive Christians?"

On the priest's face as he read this list of questions was sternness mingled with sorrow. Never before had he so candidly confronted them. They had drifted into his mind often and he had recently been conscious of changing convictions regarding them; but this night he faced them at last on the ultimate ground of Yes and No. Subterfuge and crafty methods of interpretation were flung aside. He was in the presence of Eternal Truth. The All-searching Eye was scrutinizing his soul. He would be as true now as though it were his judgment hour.

Slowly he moved his pencil down the page until it rested on the words: "In the divinity of Jesus?" Opposite this he wrote: Yes. Then after every other question he wrote: No. He had come to terms with Intellect. It remained now to make an honorable treaty with conscience. With perfect candor he listened to the insistent demands to which his conscience was giving voice. He must leave the church, it said to him; he would be dishonorable if he openly professed what he inwardly denied. He could not honestly retain his

private interpretation of fundamental dogmas in a church which denies private judgment and rests upon the basis of infallibility. There is no room for hesitation. Leave the church!

So spoke the primitive natural nobility of the man. But was there not another side? Had his impulsive sense of honor taken in all the factors of the situation? Had not his conscience need of further enlightenment? There was surely ground for thinking so. Why should not a modern Catholic interpret dogmas in a new sense? The Nicæan definition was new in its day. Doubtless it would have been unintelligible to the first Christian converts of Palestine. The language of Trent regarding the Eucharist is surely a change from that of the first century *Didachè*. The present form of the sacrament of Penance was unknown to several Christian centuries. Why then may not enlightened Catholics to-day add one more change to many preceding changes? Perhaps some ecumenical council of the twentieth or twenty-first century will state dogmatic formulas precisely as he was now understanding them. Furthermore the liberal Catholics of his way of thinking were not leaving the church, yet they were good and conscientious men. Finally, how can Catholicism ever make the required modification in its creed-statements unless men who see the necessity of these modifications remain in the church, and quietly disseminate their ideas until the whole mass of believers be leavened?

Impressive as these considerations were, the inner voice would not be stilled. It said, and kept saying: "But your character will suffer. You cannot play at double-dealing and not be injured in sincerity and honor. You must not trifle with deceit on the plea that in a hundred years it will no longer be deceit. You have a higher responsibility to your integrity now than to a problematical theology of a century from now. Leave, and be a martyr of candor, rather than remain and be a servant of duplicity!"

The dawn was already breaking when Ambrose, undecided and perplexed, rose wearily from this contention within his soul, and flung himself down for a brief and broken rest. He felt that in so grave a matter he must have advice; and it administered a kind of sad relief to him that his momentous decision must be postponed until he should have found some opportunity for consultation.

XXII

On a day in the first week of March Axton was to elect a selectman to serve three years. The village was governed by three selectmen, two of whom were chosen for two years and one for three. This last, by the fact of his election for the longer term, was chairman of the board, and in general had greater power and influence in the town government than any other man. Squire Wakefield had held the office for the past three years and was ambitious to be re-elected. More than that, he was altogether confident of re-election. For while his harshness of disposition had made him many enemies, his unquestioned forcefulness of character along with his wealth and social position, overcame the unorganized remonstrances against him, and seemed to leave him a clear field. In fact, at the beginning of February, not a single opponent had announced his candidacy against him, and all indications pointed to the Squire's unanimous nomination, and all but unanimous election. True, there had been a remarkably large registration of new voters from the workingmen's colony about the car shops; and as these men were nearly all of foreign birth, they could hardly be expected to vote for a man of the Squire's well-known prejudices against the alien. Still these recently naturalized citizens were to all appearances no serious obstacle to the happy issue of Mr. Wakefield's little ambition. They were unskilled in politics;

they had thus far made no attempt, at least publicly, to unite upon a candidate of their own; and above all they were in a considerable minority in comparison with what the Squire would call the respectable voters of Axton. So with election day little more than a month distant, and with only two weeks remaining of the legal time in which to file nominations, the chairman of the Axton selectmen had no anxiety about so predestined a certainty as his triumphant return to office.

On the evening of the first day of February, however, there assembled in a rude hall in the car-shop district half a dozen men whose deliberations might well have caused the confident Squire an uneasy quarter of an hour. The leader of them was Murdock; another was Richard Wakefield, the outcast son; a third, Pasquale Ciasca; the other three were among the cleverest of the restless radicals who acknowledged Murdock as chief.

"Well, Murdock," Richard Wakefield was saying, as they took their seats about a small beer-stained table, on which burned a kerosene lamp, the sole light in the large room; "I have done everything, we have all done everything possible; but we can't beat the old man. I'd give one of my fingers to defeat him at this election, but it is out of the question."

"You have made a careful canvass of the voters?" questioned Murdock.

"I have," answered Richard. "There are in Axton five hundred voters. We can count on one

hundred and fifty to do whatever we tell them. After careful inquiry, I estimate that about fifty men will refuse to vote for the governor, because they share his loving son's contempt for him. But of these fifty, perhaps not a single man would support a candidate that represented us. We are the offscourings of the earth, you know. Don't look for a vote for our interests, not one, beyond the boundaries of the shops."

"That leaves a maximum of three hundred for the Squire," ruminated Murdock.

"Three hundred," repeated Richard; "two to our one."

"Kill some of them!" exclaimed Ciasca. "Kill ten, twenty, fifty! Dat dog Danfort! Blow up his church. Kill dem!" he shouted, bringing down his fist with a tremendous blow that seemed likely to shatter the unsteady table into fragments.

"Pasquale," said Murdock with a smile; "I believe you would do it, and a good service it would be. But we cannot afford such measures now. Let us see if strategy cannot accomplish something. Dick, haven't you underestimated the opposition to your old man? He has made enemies right and left. I am sure more than fifty voters have turned against him."

"Well," answered the dutiful son of the "old man," "there's one feature of the case that I am somewhat in the dark about. My beloved dad is fighting minister Danforth. He seems to share Pasquale's grudge against him. Now Danforth

is a popular man; and the governor's hostility to him will surely lose some votes over and above that fifty, to the dear old duffer. But what is the use talking? We can't get in our man; the majority against us is too big. My advice is: Don't nominate a candidate at this election; but work quietly for another year or two, and then we may stand a fair chance of winning."

"No!" protested Pasquale; "we must have a-what you call? — candidate. We fight for him. We mak' speech. We work lak hell. We win."

"Three hundred votes!" mused Murdock, too accustomed to the explosions of his Italian lieutenant to pay much attention to them. "I am sure he cannot poll over two hundred and fifty. We have at the lowest one hundred and fifty. The question of practical politics is, how can we divert one hundred votes from the snob Wakefield? Excuse me, Dick, for thus referring to your Daddy."

"Say what you please about him," snapped Dick. "I'm through with him and I want to lick him worse than you do. But you can't overcome that hundred votes to save your life. A hundred votes is a tremendous figure in a village of this size."

"Don't be too sure of that. A few deep thoughts are running through my mind that may upset your old man's hopes and realize ours. You say the Squire is fighting a losing game against Danforth?"

"Yes, a losing game. For while a certain num-

ber of Danforth's congregation agree with this father of mine that the minister has too many wild ideas, and associates too much with the unclean herd at the settlement-house; and while others of them are kicking because Danforth has taken up two or three collections in church for his work among us foreigners, still he has with him the majority of both pew-holders and trustees. The old man will never succeed in getting the parish to request Danforth's resignation."

"When is the next meeting of the trustees, do you know?" asked Murdock.

"The first Sunday in March," answered Richard. "Their custom is to meet on the first Sunday of every second month."

"The first Sunday in March," Murdock repeated. "That is two days before election. Splendid! Dick," he said gaily, laying his hand on young Wakefield's shoulder; "suppose we fight on your old man's side for once. Let's give Danforth a black eye so that the Squire may be encouraged to go after him for a knock-out at the trustees' meeting. The deeper we drive the wedge of this quarrel, you understand, the bigger the result at the ballot box."

"You are running after a will-o-the-wisp," said Richard; "but what do you propose to do?"

"Leave that to me," answered Murdock. "I'll think out a scheme that will turn aside twenty-five or thirty votes from the Squire if I know anything about politics,"

"What good will that do?" was Richard's petulant question. "There is still a safe majority of seventy-five."

"But," replied Murdock, with an astute smile; "there is going to be nominated a third independent ticket since the Squire's enemies won't vote for our man. On this ticket will run an eminently respectable gentleman — that word respectable is a great word — who will get enough support to give us outcasts of the car-shops a fair fighting chance for the chief office of the town government of Axton. And the name of this independent candidate, this respectable gentleman, who will be the means of victory for us, is Mr. Richard Wakefield."

"Murdock, what do you mean?" exclaimed the young man thus honored. "I run against my father?"

"Oh, have you filial scruples about doing so?" was Murdock's sarcastic question.

"No, I have no filial scruples," came the sharp reply; "but —"

"Then what's the matter with my scheme?" put in Murdock, no less sharply. "I'll run as a Socialist. The voters disgruntled with old Wakefield will vote for young Wakefield, at least many of them will, of course not expecting to elect you; they don't want to elect you. But they will vote for you because of their grudge and because you are respectable. Then our solid block of one hundred and fifty cast for me, for you are all urging

me to be a candidate if we are to have one at all, will have a fair chance of deciding the day. Dick, there is only one side to the question. Of course you will run."

"But I am known to be mixed up with you fellows," objected Dick, who was instinctively shrinking from the unnatural position into which the older man was forcing him.

"Yes," answered Murdock, with the easy way of a man who tosses aside an insignificant objection; "in a general way it is known that you have associated with us more than Puritan prejudice would approve; but no one outside our own group is aware of how intimately you are bound to us. There is no question that you will poll from fifty to seventy-five votes. That means that with good fighting we will win. And Richard, my boy, when I am chairman of the Axton selectmen, you will be well rewarded for your assistance."

The other four men added their importunities to Murdock's, and before the conference closed the nomination papers of Richard Wakefield were drawn up according to law.

XXIII

One evening, a week after the hatching of the political plot just described, Squire Amos Wakefield sat alone in his library in high good humor. The note-book containing complaints against the Reverend Josiah Danforth lay open on the desk before him, and in his hand was a large sheet of paper well covered with transcriptions from the complaints aforesaid. The Squire, tilted back in his chair, was nodding and smiling at this latter document with infinite complacency. Events were most providentially playing into his hand. The upstart minister's doom was written and sealed; and soon Axton should have got rid of him, and obtained a minister for First Church who should be neither fool nor fanatic, but such a man as was demanded by Puritan proprieties.

Three nights previously the classes at Danforth's settlement-house had been broken up by a gang of ruffians. On the following night the disorder was repeated, and Danforth himself rather roughly dealt with. Next morning two or three of the trustees called on the minister and besought him to suspend his classes for at least a month. Danforth refused. He was going to show no white feather to Murdock's miserable mob. Appeals on the ground of "respectability," and "the dignity of your office," availed nothing. So on the evening just preceding the one on which we have looked in upon the Squire complacent and smiling in his

library, the dauntless Danforth appeared before his pupil-comrades at Fraternity House. These pupil-comrades were his friends; and, angered at the happenings of the two preceding evenings, had assembled this night in no mood to give ground before the ruffians who had twice dispersed them. The ruffians arrived again; the pupil-comrades met them manfully — and for the first time in the history of Axton, the two village constables, and half an hour later the volunteer men, were frantically summoned to quell a riot. Josiah Danforth took home with him that night a pair of badly discolored eyes, which all the world might see, and a deeply discouraged heart, which only he himself, through a mist of tears, might see.

The next morning Fraternity House was in ashes.

Amos Wakefield's thoughts as he sat in his library that night smiling at the indictment of his pastor on the paper before him, may be paraphrased as follows: "I think our fast-galloping young minister is knocked out of the saddle at last. He will soon realize that wild runaways and vulgar radicals are not wanted in the Unitarian church or in Puritan communities. In the Salvation Army or in Romanism he may find an environment of congenial folly; but whatever becomes of him, thank heaven his hours in Axton are numbered. In demanding his resignation at the trustees' meeting, I must make the speech of my life. Let me run through once more the headings of my charges against him:

He insulted one of his trustees in open town-meeting.

He is scandalously friendly with the Roman priest here.

He has descended to vulgar familiarity with foreign laborers.

He has neglected his duty to his parish: First by abandoning our Sunday night service in order to preach to his anarchist and Romanist aliens; and secondly, by running about the country in the interests of his idiotic league of something-or-other.

He publicly insulted his brethren in the ministry in a speech at our theological school. (Note: Read the professor's letter.)

He has imposed on the parish an unwarranted and unauthorized burden by taking up collections for his foolish Fraternity House.

He has been the cause of and has taken part in, fighting and rioting.

He has humiliated his congregation by working for his anarchists with so little fruit that the objects of his fanatical zeal have just burned his settlement-house to the ground.

All this proves that Axton First Church has for its pastor a hair-brained zealot, an unbalanced man, an improper minister, and must, therefore, in sheer self-respect take measures to get rid of him. We cannot have this man on our nerves any longer, not knowing what foolish and humiliating venture he will undertake next. It is high time

that the congregation return to a normal and orderly religious life under a sane and conservative pastor, who will have some regard for the decencies of his position, and at least a small measure of respect for the traditions of our Puritan fathers.

"A pretty strong case! A pretty strong case! And when I clinch it by warning the trustees that in all probability Danforth will call upon the parish to build a new settlement-house, I think those honorable gentlemen, whose pockets are more obnoxious to argument than their heads, will decide to recommend to the congregation that Josiah Danforth be dismissed. And I feel sure the congregation will not disregard the recommendation. For however foolishly some of them worship the ground he stands on, they will see that it is better to send him away and thus bring the trouble to a speedy conclusion, than to create permanent discord in the church by retaining him. So, Mr. Danforth, I surmise that we are about to bid you an affectionate adieu."

Squire Wakefield was still sucking the sweetness out of this delicious expectation when the door bell rang, and a Mr. Perry, who was the Squire's political manager, was announced. A moment later Mr. Perry stepped into the room. Barely returning Mr. Wakefield's unusually genial greeting, Perry in notable agitation asked: "Have you heard the astounding news?"

"What astounding news?" said the Squire.

"About your son."

"What about my son?"

"Then you haven't heard of it. Your son Richard is circulating his nomination papers for the office of selectman. Though he began only this afternoon I understand he has already obtained the fifty signatures required by law to enable him to stand as candidate."

"In heaven's name, is this true? Will he run against his father, against me?" exclaimed Mr. Wakefield, his face drawn and white.

"It is true, and I don't know what to make of it," answered Perry. "Murdock, too, is to be nominated; and if I could believe your son guilty of so infamous an action, I should say he is endeavoring to split your vote in order that Murdock may win. He must know that he has no possible chance himself."

Amos Wakefield was silent a long time. The knife had been driven deep. At last he said: "Perry, let us not worry about it. On its political side this thing cannot hurt us. I cannot possibly lose. In fact, were my election not already certain, this infamous action, as you well call it, would make it so. And in so far as it is a personal sorrow to me I can bear it, as I have borne many other sorrows from the same source."

"Mr. Wakefield," said the practical politician; "I fear you underestimate the political importance of this matter. In my opinion, sir, we must do everything in our power to keep our support

intact, and carefully avoid dissension in our ranks."

"Well?" queried the Squire, who had been only half listening.

"Well," insisted Mr. Perry; "to bring the case right down to particulars, you are endangering your prospects of election by your opposition to Mr. Danforth. It is rumored that at the next meeting of the trustees you will propose that Mr. Danforth be dismissed. If you do that you can expect no support from the minister's many friends. You will lose so many votes by such an action that, to speak frankly, Murdock will have as good a chance of winning as yourself."

Amos Wakefield turned a cold, stern look upon the manager of his campaign and said in deliberate, level tones, which bespoke an absolute finality of decision: "Mr. Perry, I intend to propose the dismissal of Mr. Danforth at the trustees' next meeting; and if I am then alive no power on earth will deter me from it. This affair of Danforth's has come to a head, and I should fail in my duty if I yielded to expediency, and neglected the timeliest possible opportunity to do a service to my church and my native town. I am ready to accept all the consequences of this action; but I am sure that there are enough voters in Axton who admire courage and conviction, to elect me. I have no fear for the election, sir."

Mr. Perry made no further remonstrance, for he knew Squire Wakefield too well, and in a few moments he was gone.

Mr. Wakefield sat in his library until a late hour. But he studied his brief against the minister no more, and the smile had departed from his face. A brief had been drawn up against himself by the very hand and brain to which he had given life. This was the indictment which now in the deep night-silences clamored in his ears; this the disgrace which gripped his heart and pressed into it the agony and bitterness that only a father's outraged heart can feel.

XXIV

Father Hanlon was off on his tour of consultation. He had made provision to supply his pulpit for one Sunday, and set out to take counsel of two or three priests reputed to be among the most learned in his church. His hopes of finding consolation from them were not too high. A subconscious voice kept telling him that hope was dead. Were it merely a lack of apologetic erudition that troubled him, he would be approaching the wise men on whom he was to call, in full confidence that from their ample scholarship he would obtain the fullest information and the clearest light that Catholic scholarship could give. But his need was too deep for merely academic help. His mind was changed; his mental standards altered; his spiritual outlook wholly, and, as it appeared, hopelessly un-Catholic. He might learn some new form of the argument for Christ's deity. But his very idea of Deity had grown so great and awful that his soul recoiled from the notion that that Infinite could be a wailing infant, a growing Jewish lad, a suffering, struggling, praying man. Likewise these learned doctors might dress up in new raiment the dogma of Christ's blood-redemption. But his moral standards could not tolerate the conception of one God-person bleeding and dying to placate another God-person, and of the human race coming back into a just God's favor through the murder of an entirely innocent sacrificial vic-

tim. His soul, far more than his mind, was unorthodox; and how much harder it is to refashion a soul than to re-convince a mind! "No hope!" tolled the voice within; and No hope! began to be graven more unmistakably on that pale young face.

The momentary relief of changed surroundings was vouchsafed him as he left the train five hundred miles from Axton. His step became buoyant as he walked the streets of a city where all was new. Were these little stirrings of content, he asked himself, merely due to the fresh appeal of an unfamiliar place? or — and something in his heart answered a triumphant "Yes!" as he put the question — or did they arise because this new city where he was alone and free for a few hours, was only an anticipation of a whole new life before him in which he would be alone perhaps, but free forever? It was glorious to be free! His step quickened at the radiant thought. Then why not be free? Here is the wide world where no one knows you. Above is the spacious heaven where One does know you. Be free! Relieve this mind in prison, this soul in chains! Be the free disciple of the Infinite, not the cowardly bondman of Sebastian Shyrne!

It was a thrilling interior experience. Two spots of red showed in the thin cheeks. A light of ardor flashed from the dejected eyes. The mobile mouth grew stern. Had he just then stood in a battle column going into a charge he would have looked no different,

"Yes," said he to his own soul; "I will be free. But I must first be right, and I am now trying to be right."

At the seminary where lived the professor of Scripture whom he was seeking, he had to wait but a few minutes before the celebrated scholar entered the parlor.

"Doctor," was Ambrose's greeting to the thick-set man of fifty, who stood before him; "I must ask you to excuse me for the moment from giving my name. I have come to consult you on a very delicate matter, and I wish to wait before telling you who I am, until I can see if you can help me."

"Have it so if you wish. What is your trouble? Is your faith in danger?"

Ambrose was naturally somewhat startled at this divining of his condition. Doubtless this man had been consulted more than once in similar cases. Still this immediate approach to the subject before them made it easier for him to begin; and in a few minutes' rapid narration he described the progress of his studies, and the conclusions to which they had forced him.

"My apologetic for Catholicism," began the professor, when Ambrose finished; "is on these lines. I see God in the history of the Hebrew people. I see God in the prophets who prepared the world for Christ. I see God in Christ. And I see God in the history of the Church. Outside these events and personalities of history I cannot see God. Therefore, since I believe in God, I

believe in His supreme manifestations in the prophets, Christ and Catholicism. Do you not think that this is sufficient foundation for faith?"

"I see God, too, in these providential happenings," answered Ambrose; "but that reasoning is too summary. Because I believe in the divine as it appears in the prophets, Christ and Catholicity, must I, therefore, believe in Christ's Deity, the very God-presence in the Eucharist, and in blood-redemption? I see God wherever godlike lives are lived. I see God in some measure in every religion from Babylonian mythology to the Salvation Army; but surely that does not bind me to any definite theology?"

"The prophets," replied the learned man, "were the highest revelation of God before Christ. Had I lived in their day I should have believed in them as such. Catholicism is the highest revelation of God now. Nothing can bring me nearer to God than the Catholic religion. Therefore, I believe in it."

"Does that satisfy you as to the eternal truth of each particular Catholic dogma?" asked Ambrose.

"Yes. If Catholicism be false, we are under a colossal hallucination. It must be true or God would be guilty of having led nineteen centuries into abomination and idolatry."

"But," objected Ambrose, "millions of people have believed in false religions for a far longer time than Christianity has yet existed. It seems

to me you lay too much stress or at least put too narrow an interpretation upon that word 'true.' All religions are in a measure true, inasmuch as they help the human spirit to grow toward God. This is their divine, their religious, their eternal truth. But the formulated theologies of these religions are always turning out to be defective. And the duty of every age in the historic evolution of humanity is, while holding to the religious truth of the past, to improve upon the imperfect theology of the past. There is no question of God's being responsible for deceiving us. In giving Catholicism He gave mankind a spiritually true, that is a spiritually beautiful and helpful religion — a religion so true, in fact, in this deeper sense of the word, that the world to the end of time may well devoutly study it. But the fitness of a religion for our spiritual helpfulness is quite a different thing from the fitness of a theology for our intellectual acceptance. My difficulty is that I have come to believe that theologies must change; and that dogmas must die in old forms to be born in new and freer forms. Had I the outlook upon the universe which the Nicene theologians had, I should have no difficulty in believing that the victim of a Jewish mob was the Eternal Infinite. But my outlook upon the universe is other and wider than theirs, since I live in a later and vastly more intelligent age, and I cannot believe in a Deity who thus localizes and as it were, parochializes himself."

"I am afraid you are beyond my help," said the professor. "You are in a state of mind not to be improved by any scriptural information that I might give you. So far as I am concerned, if I were convinced that Catholicism were not true, I should fling off the restraints of moral living, and indulge my passions according to my fancy. I should cease to believe in the authority of the moral law, in immortality, or any other basic religious idea."

"What!" exclaimed Ambrose; "you cannot mean that?"

"I do mean it," was the positive answer.

"Why," protested Ambrose; "right and wrong remain if all the theologies in the world were folly. The sacredness of duty, the dominion of conscience, the high value of human life, the being of God — you do not mean to say that these eternal verities graven in the soul of man, depend upon the accuracy of any Bible, or the correctness of any system of theology?"

"If I thought Catholicism untrue, these things would mean nothing to me," insisted the professor.

Ambrose rose, with mingled pity and scorn in his heart for so utterly primitive and barbaric a religious philosophy.

"I thank you, sir," he said; "for giving me so much of your valuable time."

"Perhaps," suggested the other man, "you would do well to see our professor of philosophy. Your difficulties are mainly of a philosophical order."

"I am too tired just now," Ambrose answered; "but I am much obliged to you."

So this was all that the Catholic scholarship could do for him! This big, sweeping, unscientific apology, as crude as the pretentious scheme of Bossuet's *Universal History*; this revolting relic of savagery, that the highest ideals of the immortal spirit of man stand or fall with texts, theologies and hierarchies, were all that a trained Catholic intellect could offer to his truth-seeking soul! Ambrose tried not to yield to the bitterness and disgust that besieged him, for he understood that passion ill associated with the reverent mood in which he should pursue his search for Truth; but his disappointment was so profound, his disillusion so complete, that for the first time in his life he felt tempted to despise the faith of which he was a priest. A system that could so twist a man's mind and so pervert a man's moral judgment, thus surged his rebellious thoughts, should be scorned by every candid soul. It should be pitched into the lumber room of a hundred other decayed theologies, a hundred other hierarchal tyrannies, and allowed to obstruct the free growth of souls no longer.

From these unworthy feelings, however, he prayed to be delivered. It was no time for anger, but rather a time for sorrow. For was it not clear that he had ceased to be a Catholic, and that he had incurred that fate from which training and instinct made him shrink in terror, the "Loss of

faith?" Loss of faith! That beautiful heroic faith of earlier days! The faith that placed him in the company of apostles, saints and martyrs! The faith that had woven into the very texture of his soul the sense of priestliness and consecration! The faith of his father, mother, sister! Ah! God, here was the cruellest pang; here were Gethsemane and Calvary! He pictured himself standing before his mother and Margaret in their little home, and saying: "Mother, sister, I have left the priesthood and the Church. I have followed my conscience, but have brought disgrace and a sorrow that only death will heal, to you. I must leave you, for my presence would but keep the wound in your heart forever open, fresh and bleeding. I must go away into a world and a life unknown, and let you live and die in grief. Good-by!"

Terrifying, overwhelming, the vision rose before his inward eye. The mother whose gentle heart had taken such pride in him; the sister, loyal little Margaret, that so worshipped him, stricken prostrate by his hand! Never! Never! Never! The son and brother, resolute in the power of earth's mightiest affection, replaced the wavering, faltering priest. Suffer? Yes! Eat out his heart in voiceless sorrow? Yes! Ruin his young career? Yes! Live untrue to conscience? Yes! To spare them, Yes! What after all was this iron-hearted Truth, to demand the blood-sacrifice of his dearest and best-beloved? Must all other ideals

be shattered into fragments to obey this one alone? Had Truth all rights, and Charity none? In a conflict between Love and Truth, Mercy and Conscience, why had not Love and Mercy as good a claim to precedence as the other two? Whence and why this exclusive idolatry of Truth that bade him desecrate all other altars, even the holiest and earliest that his life had known? "Mother and Margaret come first!" his heart passionately protested. "Live in your agony; die of it; be what the world calls a hypocrite; but spare them, mother and Margaret!"

Yet above these apparently resistless tides of nature shone the persistent Truth-Ideal. With no passion in its tone, no feeling in its accents, it spoke and spoke again its imperious command. And Ambrose seemed to see assembling about that sovereign Form the chosen spirits of humanity — men who had abandoned riches and embraced poverty; men who had seen the doors of home closed in their faces; men who had gone forth alone into freezing exile and eaten the crust of the outcast; men who had wasted away in dungeons; men who had given their bodies to the rack, the screw and the lash; men who had mounted the pile of faggots and suffered the torture of devouring fire. Because they had loved Truth and shrank not from the martyr's witness against falsehood, had they done these things — and lo! they were God's elect and the saints of her mankind. "Will you join us?" they seemed sternly to ask Ambrose Hanlon.

“Will you join us?” and as the question penetrated to his heart, and spoke its challenge to his will, his conscience and his soul, that other loud cry of wounded nature died away, and he saw and heard only that the manifestation of Deity called Truth, with these its soldiers and martyrs, and from his inmost being arose his answer: “I will!”

XXV

Ambrose determined to consult only one other of the three of four men whom he had purposed to visit. After his experience with the professor, he realized that it would do him no good to discuss his difficulties with merely technical scholars. For it was his conscience, not his mind, that needed guidance. His problem was: Can I honorably remain a priest or even a Catholic? To this question erudition could give little or nothing by way of answer. No man, he reflected, could assist him in answering it save one who had passed through a crisis like his own. Such a man he had some hope of finding if the rumors concerning the priest he was now to see were true. For report had lately been current among the priests of that vicinity that this particular member of their body "had lost his faith;" "had become a follower of Loisy and Harnack;" and "had been writing anonymous articles severely criticising the Church." Ambrose made inquiries respecting this delinquent, and discovered that he was pastor of a small country congregation, a model priest, a profound student, and possessor of a library of extraordinary value. At least there was a chance that this man was in a position to understand and assist him, and he determined to avail himself of it.

Not unlike Axton was the village committed to the care of this mysterious priest-scholar; and

Ambrose wondered as he walked toward the parsonage if here, too, a crisis had come to pass like that which had cast its shadow on the parish priest of Axton.

The servant led him into the library and said that Father Fleming was engaged with a caller in the parlor, but would be free in a few minutes.

Ambrose looked about him upon a very world of books. Not only were there closely packed shelves from floor to ceiling, but in the middle of the floor and running the entire length of the room were two book-stacks of nearly a man's height, filled to the last inch. Eagerly Ambrose scanned the titles of shelf after shelf, to discover what manner of thinking and what fashion of man the roof of this sequestered rectory was sheltering. Oriental philology was represented by hundreds of volumes, with Assyrian and Old Persian predominating. This evidently was the chosen field of the pastor's researches. How odd that such studies should be carried on in a country parish! wondered Ambrose, holding in his hand a splendid edition of the Avesta in the original. Then there were the works of the biblical critics of Germany — a collection twice as large as Danforth's; the history of religion and doctrines next, a mass of volumes second only to those on Eastern languages. "Not much on philosophy," Ambrose was reflecting, when the door opened and Father Fleming entered.

"My name is Hanlon," said Ambrose, holding out his hand.

"Fleming is mine," was the response, accompanied with a cordial grasp of the visitor's hand and an invitation that he sit down and have a cigar.

Ambrose declined the cigar, not being a smoker; and asked if Father Fleming could give him a few minutes of his time.

"Certainly," was the hearty answer. "I'll light up, and then be at your service. I always enjoy both work and recreation better under the inspiration of the divine weed, tobacco. Had cigars only been known in classical times, I dare say the priestess of Apollo would have uttered her oracles in clouds like these, instead of amid the smoke of incense." Whereat Father Fleming smiled and puffed in great content.

He was still young, this pastor who cultivated Babylonian and Zend, hardly forty, Ambrose thought, with a sturdy frame, a splendid head, very keen and searching eyes, and a mouth that was well accustomed, one would fancy, to a smile of mingled amusement and pity at the follies of mankind.

As Ambrose narrated his recent intellectual and spiritual experiences, Father Fleming's face grew grave, and his head bent forward in an attitude of deep attention and deeper meditation. Ambrose concluded with mentioning his fruitless visit to the professor.

"Too bad you went to him," said Fleming, with a gesture of impatience. "He is a baby intellect-

ually. He knows more or less of criticism, and I suppose could discourse learnedly of texts and versions; but of the wider movements of thought, of the new orientation of the religious consciousness, he knows nothing at all."

Father Fleming laid aside his cigar, which had gone out, folded his hands and turning a look of great sympathy upon his guest, continued:

"Let me say, my dear Father Hanlon, that I sympathize with your perplexities and sorrows, but congratulate you on having reached vital and vigorous maturity of mind. The Creator of human intelligence wills that intelligence should grow. That we should continue forever jabbering ancient formulas, forever posturing in ancient ceremonies, without once driving intellect beneath them to see what they rest on, of what value they are, and how they fit in with intellectual and ethical development, is not only the death but the rotting of mind. It is a crime; and the education that bids us submit to this putrefaction of our God-given capacities, is high treason against God. When I cease to examine intellectually what is given me to accept intellectually; when I mumble with my lips what I refuse to allow my mind to bring to the test of reasonableness and truth; when I stick my head into the dust of the middle age and of the patristic age, so that I may not open my eyes to the modern age; — well when I consent to do that, I shall go to Patagonia at once, live on raw fish, and make a good job of frustrating God Almighty's will while I am about it.

"I will speak frankly to you, Father Hanlon, for I like you and trust you. First of all, then, whatever your sorrows, rejoice that you are using the ten talents of your mind. In studying, thinking, examining, you are doing God's will. Believe that; take comfort in that; for it is no small consolation to have God on our side. The old Zoroastrian faith which I have studied a good deal, and profoundly venerate, conceived the world and life as a field of battle, whereon the God of good things and the god of evil things fought it out. The good God's warriors were good men, wise men, whose duty it was to do battle with ignorance and darkness, and to spread light, knowledge, courage and love. A stagnant life, a life content with the good that was, and destitute of self-sacrificing enthusiasm for the greater good to come, was impossible to the faithful disciple of Zoroaster and Ahura Mazda.

"The old Persian saint and prophet was right. Stagnation is the chief of sins; to let intellect die while the forthcoming kingdom is crying for its help, is the most awful and unnatural of suicides. Here is the growing life of this universe which is somehow one with the life of God, swinging onward, away from darkness toward the light, away from ignorance toward Truth, away from the past to a more splendid future. How monstrous that any man should seek to stay the processes of this divine development! And a man does seek to stay them, and in his measure succeeds, who will not

use his highest gift of mind; who looks not to the dawn ahead, but to the midnight behind; who burrows in ancient caves because his ancestors were cave-dwellers, and snarls angrily at the men of finer and braver spirit who are ascending to the uplands at the call of God.

"You are not alone, Father Hanlon, in your sometimes sorrowful search for Truth. The saints and heroes of humanity are with you; the irresistible life of this universe is with you; the onward-leading Infinite is with you and within you.

"As to your intellectual positions I will say nothing. They are substantially my own. Now to the crux of your trouble. Can you honorably remain a Catholic and a priest? That question is for your conscience alone; the answer to it can be delegated to no other. I can only tell you what I think about the problem. What I think may mean nothing to you; but I take it that you wish me to state my position, so that your own conscience may have additional data on which to base its final judgment. My position is this: The processes of the diviner life of developing humanity must be assisted by such means as our imperfect world can furnish. These processes are not abrupt. They develop normally and ordinarily by growth, seldom by revolution. As a priest of the church I can help this forward movement by using my office and all the prestige of a venerable religious system to inculcate the virtues of noble character. I am forever preaching conscience,

love of truth, justice, benevolence, the spirit of service, responsibility, manliness and character. If I speak of dogmas whose present formulation I cannot accept, I say nothing of the philosophical terminology of them, and insist only on their value as means of putting us into the mood of kinship with spiritual realities and God. I feel that I am thus living not in vain, and that I am employing such instrumentalities as are within my reach for teaching the religion of the spirit; and so long as I can continue to do this I see no imperative reason why I should abandon an opportunity for greater usefulness than I could find elsewhere.

"I have had one or two of my parishioners come to me to say that if they followed reason and conscience they must leave the Catholic Church. I have simply told them to study and pray, and do what they believed God wanted them to do. Again, from time to time a few of my boys have desired to become priests. I have discouraged them as strongly as I could, and I have saved some of them from a life which it is more than probable they should have found a misery and a crucifixion.

"In conclusion, Father Hanlon, let me say that if circumstances should arise, and"—here a cynical smile came upon Father Fleming's face—"certain gentlemen seemed bound on making them arise, which would threaten the integrity of my character, or menace the development and peace of my soul, I would resist them even to leaving the Church. But if, while still independent and free,

I can help the good to become better, the bad to become good, the sorrowful to find consolation, I will do so in my present office, believing that I am thus contributing my mite toward that coming kingdom wherein men will be able to distinguish between the vulgar disputes of theology and the eternal verities of religion."

A few more questions and answers, a little further discussion of details, and the interview was over.

As Father Hanlon walked toward the village station, there was less dejection in his manner; and one would say from observing his face that his mind was quiet and his spirit free from at least any grievous agitation.

XXVI

The early dusk of a winter evening was settling over Axton as Father Hanlon stepped from the train, home again from his quest for light. The comforting thought of home made quiet music in his heart as he approached the hotel; and his glad content was deepened at Nahum Cuttle's affectionate greeting.

"Lots o' folks been askin' for ye, Father Hanlon," said Nahum. "Someone started the report that you had been taken away from Axton for good and all; and my! but the people of this village were sorry. Some o' your own church members came inquiren', but still more who ain't in your membership at all. An' they all declared it would be a shame to have you leave here. You've got friends here, and if ever you need 'em they'll prove it, too."

Some little assurance that he would not leave, that he would remain in this kindly neighborhood of friends, and that he would be happy among them, found itself ensconced in the young priest's heart as he went upstairs to his room, and for the first time in many weary weeks the strain of a song was on his lips.

As he opened his door he saw a note that had been pushed under it, lying on the floor. Opening the paper the following words met his eye:

Dear Father,—

Please come to see me at once when you return.

MARY KILEY.

Not much alarmed about Mary's condition, for she would hardly have written had her illness become notably worse, but considerably puzzled by the novelty and urgency of the request, Ambrose at once set out for the Kiley cottage. "It's Father Hanlon, dear," he heard Matt say as he approached the door. A moment later his honest sexton's two rough hands were grasping his slender one, and in a cheery voice he said:

"Well, Matt, I am delighted to see you, and delighted to set foot in this house once more."

Matt, still holding his pastor's hands, only looked at him with tears streaming from his eyes.

"Matt," cried the priest, his own face becoming ashen; "what is the matter? Has anything happened?"

"Come, Father," was all that Matt could say, leading him toward Mary's room. An agony of sorrow fell upon the young priest's heart as he followed. Was it true then that his little saint had given, or was about to give, her white spirit back to God?

They entered the room. Mary was in a hospital chair with a blanket about her. "Father," she said, with her infinitely sweet smile, "stand just there; don't come any further." Then her thin, almost snow-white hands threw back the folds of the blanket, she grasped the arms of the chair as though to steady herself, stood up, and walked to the priest, her hands extended to greet him.

"Mary," cried Father Hanlon, not only taking her hands, but holding her for a moment to his breast; "you are cured!"

"Yes, Father," said Mary, "miraculously cured!"

Her father and Ambrose, who was in a tumult of wonder, gratitude, and awe, led her back to the chair, tenderly replaced the blanket about her, and she began her wonderful story.

"For some time past," she said, "a strange conviction that I should get well had taken hold of me. It grew deeper and stronger every day until it became an irresistible certainty. I knew I should be cured. I felt that God's will was being disclosed to me. I seemed to be drawing on the resources of infinite strength, of God's own infinite life. My heart beat quicker at the thought and I imagined that perfect, perfect health was surging through my body. I used to try if those poor paralyzed nerves and muscles would respond to my will, but they did not for a long time. The very day after you left Axton, 'Cured!' 'Cured!' 'Cured!' kept ringing in my ears. I tried harder to direct the current of the vitality I felt pouring into me, into the nerves that were lifeless. I felt wonderfully, awfully near to God, and in a kind of ecstasy of confidence, I sat up in bed, I stood upon the floor, and God's merciful miracle was accomplished."

Matt cried softly as his child was speaking. Father Hanlon, whose own eyes were not dry, took

her hand when she had finished, and out of the depths of his heart uttered a prayer of thanksgiving. His concluding words were: "Father, the healing of broken hearts is also with thee and thee alone. We beseech thee that in this hour while we rejoice that thou hast given back to us who love her, thy child whole and restored, thou wilt visit some desolate and downcast spirit, and heal it with thy own secret, wonderful and abounding consolation."

"Father," cried Matt, now sobbing uncontrollably; "those last words are for me and for my poor, broken heart. God help me!"

"Why, Matt," said Father Hanlon; "how can your heart be broken in this blessed hour except it is joy that breaks it? What in the world do you mean?"

"Father Hanlon," said Mary, in a low and shaken voice; "I will tell you what my father means. The life that God has given back is His. It were robbery and sacrilege to spend it for any earthly purpose. I must — or this miracle is meaningless, and will turn to my greater condemnation — I must henceforth be God's alone. This also was in my thought in those days of confidence preceding my cure; and I promised God the life that He was about to restore. The doctor says that I shall have regained almost perfect strength by mid-summer. I shall stay here till then. But in the fall I will enter a sisterhood, and spend my life in a hospital for incurables."

A long silence fell upon the three — Mary the snow-white mystic; Matt in the agony of father-love bereaved; Ambrose groping toward the darkest crisis of all. The clock ticked on the shelf, and there was no other sound. The winter darkness deepened, and the stars came out in the sky. Rarely had their pure rays shone upon such divinities of faith, sanctity, and sorrow, as were together in that room. Seldom had God led to a common Calvary by ways so different, three of His children whose hearts were bound so closely to one another and to Him.

To Father Hanlon, walking slowly home that night, the Church of his ancestors, his youth, his priesthood, spoke again the all but irresistible appeal of her incomparable sanctity and mysticism. Mother of heroes, saints and virgins; fruitful parent of mighty souls; nurse and preceptress of consecration and self-sacrifice; the Church of angelic little Mary, and of many thousand other Marys in every part of this round earth — she rose before the vision of this her priest who had spoken his vows at her altar, and was now wavering on the brink of apostasy, and demanded that he be faithful to his vow and depart not from her, for outside her he could find no beauty, poetry, divinity, such as had crowned her with centuries of holiness, and assembled about her the unnumbered communion of her saints. Science? What amount of science could tell him so much of God as he had just seen in that lowly cottage? Truth? Ah!

had not Mary Kiley beheld essential, spiritual, infinite Truth in a manner and to a degree impossible to all the academies and criticisms in the world? Let him go back to his early pieties. Let him abandon the scholars to learn the deeper lore of the saints. Let him again spend hours as he was wont to do, kneeling in mysterious raptures before the crucifix and the altar. Let him forego the aridities and the perils of vain scholarship, and reascend the mount of tranquil prayer, where his soul would enjoy the saint's vision and share the mystic's peace.

The old conflict! would it never end? Were his heart that was for flinging itself into the arms of Mother-Church, and his mind that persisted in straying away from her, never to be reconciled? To-night his heart in the glow of its recent experience, had the upper hand. "Perhaps to-morrow," said he to himself, "something will happen to exasperate my intellect as much as to-night my soul has been uplifted."

There was prophecy in the reflection. On the morrow something did happen, which, following immediately upon his exalted experiences of the night before, startlingly illustrated to Father Hanlon, that contrast of sublimity and puerility which is forever presenting itself to the student of Catholicism. Before narrating the occurrence, a word of explanation is necessary. Bishop Shyrne owned a large vineyard, which enabled him not only to furnish the priests of his diocese with

altar-wine for the celebration of mass, but also to sell a goodly portion of the product in the form of table-wine. As, according to theology, the wine used at the altar must be the unadulterated juice of the grape; and as, on the other hand, the bishop's table-wine was treated with divers admixtures, great care was taken to keep the shipments separate. Some confusion, however, in this matter, led to the writing of the following letter by the priest who had the superintendence of the vineyard. As we have intimated, Ambrose received the letter the day after his memorable visit to Mary.

Dear Father Hanlon,—

Ten days ago we shipped you, according to your order, three dozen bottles of wine to be used in the celebration of mass. To my great regret I have just discovered that the wine sent you was, by the mistake of our foreman, not altar-wine, but table-wine. Now while this latter is undoubtedly good wine, it is with us as with all dealers, so treated as to make it one or two per cent. less pure than altar-wine must be, according to theology. It is probable therefore, that our table-wine is not fit matter for consecration; and that consequently it would not be changed into the Precious Blood of our Lord in the mass. If so, of course there is no proper sacrifice of the mass when such wine is used.

I am very sorry for this humiliating and most serious mistake. It is the first time it has happened, and it will be the last. I am sending you today three dozen bottles of genuine altar-wine, and you may return the other if you choose.

I hardly need to suggest that the masses you may have said with the table-wine must be repeated in order to satisfy the intentions for which they were offered.

Sincerely yours,

REV. F. BRINKHOFFER.

Ambrose's premonition was correct. His mind was shocked as profoundly as last night his heart had been inspired. What disgusting casuistry! What a riot of superstition! Because one wine was one or two per cent. less purely the juice of the grape than the other, therefore the latter could be changed into the blood of Christ, and the former could not! The supposed infinite Sacrifice of the Mass, that colossal drama in which the whole process of Christ's redemption of humanity is really repeated, depends on this contemptible detail! And the large-hearted Prophet of Galilee, who despised casuistry, and scored with the burning words of His wrath the casuists of His day — did He at that Last Supper, when He instituted this communion-meal of His disciples, have in mind the gross, barbaric materialism of this pagan theology? Ambrose flung the letter into the grate and paced the floor in anger. Heart was silent now and mind had the upper hand.

XXVII

On the Sunday before election-day the trustees of First Church held their regular meeting. Squire Wakefield was present, with implacable resolution in his heart, and the document of indictment against minister Danforth in his hand. The other trustees, warned of what was coming, looked nervous and uncomfortable. They were unwilling to depose Mr. Danforth; yet they feared Amos Wakefield, and dreaded permanent dissension in the parish. Dissension there would be none, if only the Squire would keep quiet. But to keep quiet, despite the appeals of several of the influential men of the congregation, he absolutely and angrily refused. In his heart at least, whatever might be the case with others, lingered no moving memories of Danforth's sermon of that very morning on the brotherhood of man. On Danforth's downfall he was determined, and he had come to this meeting to accomplish it.

The Squire began his speech against his pastor with stating the reasons which gave him authority to speak on matters affecting a Unitarian congregation. He was of Puritan stock, and had inherited through ten generations the faith of the Pilgrims, of which Unitarianism was the normal evolution. He ventured to say that no man in Axton had been more faithful to the parish church than he. He begged the pardon of the trustees for referring to the fact, not as a boast but as

testimony to the loyalty of his church-membership, that for years he had contributed one-fourth of the entire income of First Church. He protested that it was for no personal reason, but for the good of religion that he was engaged in this present painful enterprise; and besought his fellow-trustees to consider with similar high-mindedness the undeniable facts that he was about to lay before them.

Then came the detailed charges against the minister.

"Finally gentlemen," he concluded, "you cannot be blind to this, that if Mr. Danforth be retained, a dissension will be created in the parish which will wreck it utterly. Dismiss Mr. Danforth, and whatever the feeling of his partisans for the day and hour, we shall speedily settle down to the quiet and normal life of an orderly Christian congregation. What man, therefore, can question the prudence and far-sightedness of requesting Mr. Danforth to resign? So far as I am concerned, I cannot continue to be a member of a parish which approves and encourages the excesses of a good but unbalanced man. And I give warning that while Josiah Danforth remains minister of First Church, I must cease to be accounted a member, and must not be expected to contribute another penny to its support." With the offering of a resolution setting forth that the trustees felt called upon to request the pew-holders of the church to vote on the retirement of Mr. Danforth,

and that the trustees themselves recommended this retirement, Squire Wakefield was through.

Among the eleven trustees Mr. Danforth was not without friends; and two forceful and earnest speeches were made in his favor. But the dread of a schism, coupled with one cannot say how much fear of the Squire and apprehension at the loss of his contribution, carried the day, and the Wakefield resolution was adopted by a vote of six to five.

On the following evening, which was the day before the town election, Mr. Danforth sent word to Father Hanlon to beg the favor of an immediate visit. The priest, since his return, had not been able to see his friend to offer his sorrowful sympathy on the late troubles at the settlement-house, and on the destruction of the building which had enshrined so many of the cherished hopes, and so much of the apostolic zeal of Josiah Danforth. Of the action of the trustees the day before, Hanlon had not heard.

Entering the minister's study, Ambrose was affectionately greeted, and still holding Danforth's hand, he expressed his fraternal condolence for the misfortunes that had lately befallen.

"You have heard of the action of my trustees?" Danforth asked.

Father Hanlon had not heard, and Mr. Danforth straightway informed him.

"Jo," said Ambrose tenderly, "you are not going to leave Axton; you are not going to leave your

friends, of whom none is more devoted to you than I, are you?"

"Yes, Ambrose," was the answer; "I am going to leave. Not that I fear fighting out this matter with Amos Wakefield; far from it. But my remaining here, on the supposition that I should be sustained by the majority of the congregation, would involve bad feeling and dissension, two misfortunes which, as a Christian minister, it is my duty to avert. Next Sunday I preach my farewell sermon."

"This is a crime," protested Ambrose.

"If so," said Mr. Danforth, smiling gravely; "it is an ancient one. Hierarchies, and the equivalents thereof in our non-Catholic churches, demand tradition with all its respectability, conformity with all its regularity. The innovator who disturbs the old, or the dreamer who works for his vision of the new, is a vexatious fanatic who must be silenced. Time was when he was crucified."

"Ambrose," resumed the minister after a pause; "I sent for you to-night because I felt a bit lonely and discouraged. Not, I think, because of what has happened to me, but for a deeper reason. Does the horrible temptation ever assail you, to despair of the perfectibility of human nature and of the consequent usefulness of our vocation?"

"In just that form I have not felt the temptation," Ambrose responded. "All history tells me that humanity has grown better, and gives me assurance that the progress will continue. But

what does crush me in my darker hours is the agony of slowness with which mankind crawls upward, and the immeasurable time it will require appreciably to reduce the overwhelming accumulation of wickedness in this world."

"Yes, that is it," replied Danforth; "you have expressed it better than I did. It is the weakness of our moral appeal, the colossal power of unrighteousness, and the tedious grinding of the mills of God,—it is this that hurts, stuns and prostrates one. Now, recently I have had two disheartening experiences which have thrown me into desolation. The president of one of the societies in the Conscience and Country League, a man whom I regarded as having the highest conception of both conscience and country, has just been unmasked as a profligate and embezzler. And yesterday two of the trustees who voted for Squire Wakefield's resolution against me, acknowledged that their main motive was dread of the higher church-tax which should fall on them if Wakefield stopped his contributions. Yet these men have sat under me Sunday after Sunday as I preached on the ideals of character and Christianity. 'What is the use? What is the use?' the tempter has been saying to me all day. It is only a temporary obsession, I know, but it has made me blue."

"The crowd shouted 'Hosanna' on Palm Sunday and 'Crucify Him' five days later," remarked the priest.

"Ah yes," said Danforth, "how richly are we consoled and strengthened by looking unto Him, the great Prophet of the broken heart!"

"The prophet's predestined lot is a broken heart," said Father Hanlon.

"It is," affirmed the minister; "yet God grant us the grace to be His prophets!"

"Is there anything," exclaimed Danforth ardently, "more sublime than the death of a man who dies for an apparently impossible ideal? Look at Christ! What egregious folly the respectability of His day conceived Him to be committing! He had youth, graciousness, every high gift of mind and heart. How respectable He could have been! Yet He fixed His gaze on a vision that to the crowd and to the world was madness. He looked not at the opportunities that lay at His feet, but at the distant kingdom of spiritual freedom, of human brotherhood, of God's benign sovereignty over a regenerated world. How fanatical! Steadfastly He kept His eyes on that divine, far-off ideal; and to the scandal of common clay, He died for it. Ambrose, let our trials and temptations be what they will, we will live for the folly of that same ideal, and if God so favors us, will, in some sense, die for it."

A bell tinkled in the room. Danforth rose and said: "Come, dear Ambrose, it is mother's call. Join us at prayer. It may be our last night together."

Mrs. Danforth and Dorothy were awaiting

them; and as they knelt down Father Hanlon's heart was heavy with those words in his ears: "It may be our last night together."

"Yea, the hour cometh," sounded the sweet voice of the Quaker matron, "that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God."

Not without sorrow, whatever its higher consolations, was the half-hour of meditations that followed. If the light of a "far-off Ideal" shone upon the souls of the little group, the shadow of approaching separation lay upon their human hearts; and human hearts can suffer, though the spirit be at peace.

Mr. Danforth concluded the exercise with reading: "This is my commandment that ye love one another even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Good-nights were soon said, and Ambrose and Dorothy left the house together. The priest had never accompanied the girl to her home, with the exception of the night that Pasquale Ciasca had annoyed her. But to-night without a request on his part or invitation on hers, it seemed natural even inevitable, to both that he should take his place by her side; and thus together they entered the narrow, unlighted road that led to Squire Wakefield's residence.

"Father Hanlon," said Dorothy; "our hearts and our village are to be visited with calamity."

"What shall we do without him?" spoke the priest, more to himself than to her.

"We shall suffer cruelly, for he is become part of us," the girl responded. "But greater than our personal pain will be the misfortune of the separation of you and Mr. Danforth. That you or I should lose the presence of a dear friend, is a small matter in comparison with what a great Cause will suffer because you two shall co-operate no more."

"I confess I was looking only at the personal side of it," said Ambrose; "what cause do you mean, Miss Wakefield?"

"The Cause I once mentioned to you early in our acquaintance, after your course of sermons on the church. By the way, it was dreadfully bold of me to speak to you as I did that day. Did you not think then that I was one of those brazen women who are a humiliation to our sex and a terror to yours?"

"Not for an instant," protested Ambrose. "Permit me to say that no one could even look upon the countenance of Miss Dorothy Wakefield, and have any such idea."

Did she draw a little closer to him? Perhaps so. At any rate his heart raced a bit faster for the next minute. But this may have been because he was unused to speaking complimentary words to women; though this compliment he meant and felt sincerely.

"We talked that day," resumed Dorothy,

"about the inspiring religion that is to come. To that religion pure, free, spiritual, mystical, the Unitarian faith that I love, has priceless elements to contribute. Your ancient church, too, has other priceless elements. Prophets, teachers, and it may be martyrs, are needed to combine Unitarian freedom and simplicity, with Catholic solidarity and spiritual richness. This is the Cause I mean. And I believe that the beginning of the divine work could hardly be committed to better hands than Josiah Danforth's and yours. Mr. Danforth has a mystical, shall I say a Catholic, soul. You, of course, possess that, too; but, if I am not bold in saying so, you have come to realize that you have a Unitarian mind. How rare and magnificent an opportunity for you to work together. And now the hope is shattered, the dream dissolved."

They came to Mr. Wakefield's gate, but passed it, silent.

"I suppose you realize, Miss Wakefield," Ambrose at last said very gravely; "that were I to take part in such a project, I should have to leave the Catholic Church."

"Father Hanlon"—Dorothy's hand rested on his arm for a moment—"don't say that. Is it not the answer of opportunities? If the Ideal, the Cause, appeals to you, you will not think of self, will you?"

It was a very searching question, and it hurt him.

"Miss Wakefield," he answered after a long

pause; "I have been terribly upset of late. I must gain a season of tranquillity before I can determine what my future shall be. But your Ideal does appeal to me, to all that is best within me. I have told you this before; but let me now add the prayer that Heaven may grant me the favor of working for this great Cause, and for the hastening of its day of triumph on earth."

They turned and walked toward her house again.

"It is strange," remarked Dorothy, "how the lives of you two men are being led forward. Mr. Danforth has been too Catholic; and therefore a tyrannical faction seeks to destroy him. But he will not be destroyed. Elsewhere, if not here, he will do his great work undaunted. He holds his personality too sacred to allow brute force to annihilate it. You, on the other hand, have been too Unitarian. Hence, a tyrannical hierarchy may seek to destroy you. I admire you too much not to think that if this crisis comes, you likewise will esteem your life and talents of too divine a value to be crushed and frustrated by despotism."

They were standing now at her gate. He took her hand and said: "Good night, Miss Wakefield; and let me thank you for this inspiring conversation. It sheds new light on the momentous debate that is going on within me."

He felt a long, warm pressure of her hand. "Good night, dear friend," she said; "and God direct you!"

XXVIII

Election day in Axton, after the most exciting campaign the little village had ever known! True there had been no public meetings, no speeches from the hustings, no parading and processions. But intense activity of a far more practical and substantial character there had been to an almost metropolitan degree. The managers of the three candidates had made so thorough a canvass that there was not a voter in the village who had not been approached by at least one petitioner, and his suffrage pleaded for with uncommon ardor. Mr. Wakefield's lieutenants held up before the wavering the absolute certainty and the appalling calamity of Murdock's election if every "decent" man in Axton did not support the Squire. Young Richard's henchmen drilled it into such as they could get to listen, that it was high time Axton disposed of its harsh and conceited "boss." They pathetically pictured the cruel measures of the old man which had driven Richard from home. They maintained that it was reluctantly, and through no desire for revenge, but solely for the public good that the son had entered the lists against the father. And finally they failed not to take advantage of Mr. Danforth's popularity to belabor vigorously his arch-enemy, the Squire. As for Murdock, his campaign consisted in holding his phalanx intact, and in bringing all possible influence to bear upon the workingmen who had thus far held themselves aloof from him. Upon the

village-folk he made no attempt whatever. Richard was to take care of that.

When the polls closed at four o'clock in the afternoon, nearly the entire electorate of Axton had cast their ballots. Within an hour, or at the farthest, two hours from the closing of the polls, it was expected that the vote would be counted and the result made known. No little violence of feeling had been manifested throughout the day, resulting, in one or two instances, in personal encounters; and as the time drew near for the official announcement of the contest, the town was quite given over to excitement and anxiety. Some there were who openly expressed apprehension that if the vote should be very close, dark deeds might be done in Axton before nightfall. Others scoffed at the idea; but in the crowd of perhaps four hundred men assembled in the town hall to await the returns, there was undeniably a strange, subtle sense of uneasiness. This was undoubtedly due in part to the presence of a full hundred and fifty of Murdock's foreign followers. These men were massed together near the centre of the hall, jabbering vehemently in strange tongues. Conspicuous in their party was Pasquale Ciasca. The Italian moved incessantly from one to another of his rough associates, his eyes flashing, his hands gesticulating, and his tongue most miraculously active. Many a frowning look, accompanied with guttural compliments, he turned upon the Axton men, and many a cold stare of stern reprisal he got from them. Pasquale would bear watching.

The ballots were counted on the stage, where the tellers sat at a long table in full view of their expectant townsmen. The two selectmen, not personally concerned in the fortunes of the day, presided over the process, assisted by the venerable town clerk, and one representative of each of the contestants. Mr. Perry was there for the Squire; Richard's agent was one of the trustees who had spoken in behalf of minister Danforth two days before; and Murdock's interests were looked after by a clever young Italian of the name of Gazzi, who spoke English perfectly.

Shortly after five o'clock Mr. Danforth and Father Hanlon entered the hall together. As they pushed their way through the crowd, they received and returned a hundred cordial greetings. "The two best men in the town," said one to his neighbor. "What a cursed shame that one of them is being turned out!" was the answer. "Squire Wakefield's day will come," replied number one; "and the fools who aided him against Mr. Danforth will soon regret their cowardly conduct."

The two clergymen passed close to Pasquale Ciasca who scowled at them ferociously and muttered an ugly imprecation. Danforth did not understand him, but Hanlon did, and the blood rushed to his face. He felt like having it out with the fellow then and there. "Jo," he said to his friend; "that fellow Ciasca will be a menace to this town until he gets the thrashing of his life. Only a broken head will teach him decency."

"It seems to me," answered the minister, "that he is traveling fast toward just such a fate. Some day one of these raw-boned Yankees will sit down hard on Mr. Ciasca, and there will be an end of his pernicious activity. But what's the trouble among the tellers?"

Trouble indeed there seemed to be. Gazzi was pounding the table with his fist, and uttering expostulations which, owing to the noise in the hall, Danforth and Hanlon could not make out. The quarrel, however, soon arrested the attention of the citizens, and in the ensuing silence every word spoken on the stage was heard throughout the room.

"Mr. Gazzi," Mr. Hale, the town clerk, was saying: "I request you, sir, to be quiet. Do you mean to incite trouble here?"

"I will have justice for my candidate," Gazzi almost screamed.

"At your desire, sir," replied Mr. Hale quietly; "we have gone over the figures a second time, and both tallies give the election to Amos Wakefield by four votes over Murdock, his nearest competitor. Now you demand a third review of the figures. I think you are unreasonable."

The stillness in the hall had become intense. Murdock's ominous phalanx began crushing its way toward the stage.

Mr. Mills, the senior selectman present, rose from his chair and said to Gazzi: "The people are impatient to hear the official announcement of the result. I will make this announcement with-

out delay. If Murdock wishes an official recount of the ballots, that legal resource is in his hands."

As Mr. Mills picked up the paper on which the figures were tabulated, and was about to make public declaration of them, Gazzì leaped to the front of the stage, flung up his arms and cried at the top of his voice:

"Friends of Murdock, they are cheating us! They are cheating us because we are foreigners; because we are workingmen! Defend your rights! Down with the Yankee capitalists!"

A roar of wild anger, the roar of a mob in wrath, broke from Murdock's men. "To the stage!" yelled Pasquale. "Kill them!"

A brawny fist shot out and struck Pasquale full in the mouth. In an instant twenty fists were flying into as many faces.

"Kill!" shrieked Pasquale.

"Stop this, men!" pealed a voice of mighty volume from the stage.

Before the mob stood Josiah Danforth, a living embodiment of commanding power. "Stop this disgrace to Axton!" he cried. "Stop this dishonor to the flag on the day you have exercised your citizenship!" At the words he tore from its hangings back of the table where the tellers had been sitting, the Stars and Stripes, and held it aloft. The superb voice rang out again: "Your duty to your country's flag—"

He said no more. Whirring through the air toward him flew a black object which left a thin trail of smoke. A terrific explosion seemed to

rock the building, and through the thick clouds they saw the minister prostrate on the stage, the flag fallen across his breast. Into the street rushed the men from the mills, Ciasca in the front rank grinning hideously. The others crowded to the stage. Father Hanlon was kneeling beside his friend, binding up a dreadful wound in his head, and gazing with a look of anguish into unresponding eyes.

Late that night, without having regained consciousness, Josiah Danforth died. At his bedside when his spirit sought its larger home, were his mother, Dorothy Wakefield, and Father Hanlon. Grief and human feeling had their way for a while; and then the three knelt down. Mrs. Danforth put her arm about Father Hanlon's neck. "Brother of my son," she said; "tell the Father-Spirit what I would say to Him if I could. Thank Him for me for such a boy; thank Him for my darling's holy life. Yea"—here the dear old voice sank to a forced whisper—"thank Him for his death." Ambrose said the prayer; and the three bowed their heads upon the bed where the dead prophet lay. "Friend," said the desolate mother to Ambrose, as he was leaving the house, "I have a request to make of thee which my boy would have made had he been able. The people will expect to hear at the final services some word that will bear in upon them the lesson of his life. Wilt thou, his brother, speak that word?"

"If my sorrow will permit me to speak it, I will," he answered.

XXIX

During the time just preceding Mr. Danforth's funeral, there kept intruding into the brotherly grief of Ambrose Hanlon the apprehension of what would happen when the bishop discovered that he had preached the eulogy of a Unitarian minister. When he gave Mrs. Danforth his promise to preach he was so overcome by the sorrow of the death-chamber that the magnitude of his temerity did not appear to him. But as in later hours he reflected on the situation, he was startled to see into the grip of what calamity he was yielding himself. Hardly any other law in the entire system of Catholic precept is more stringent than the prohibition against direct co-operation in heretical services. Were a Catholic layman to join in the prayers and hymns of non-Catholic worship, he would, according to the church's theology, commit a mortal sin deserving of eternal damnation. And when he confessed this sin against faith, he would get a far severer lecture from his father-confessor than if he had acknowledged himself guilty of arson or adultery. What then of a priest, who would take part in a Protestant religious function, not unobtrusively, not as an indistinguishable unit in a great throng, but conspicuously, yes, as a very leader of it? The Catholic conscience of the entire country would shudder at the scandal; the heaviest penalty in the church's power to inflict would probably be

visited upon him. Degradation that might be life-long would not be considered an excessive punishment for so great a fall, so manifest an apostasy. All day Wednesday with the funeral set for the next morning, Ambrose was confronted with the ghastly crisis which he had long been viewing only as a possibility and at a distance. Here it was face to face with him, and in a more terrible form than he had ever pictured it. At times during the past weeks he had thought that, if at last his conscience would force him to leave the church, his withdrawal would be very quiet. He would simply resign his parish, telling the reason to no one; would retire to some remote place; and amid people who knew nothing of his past, would start life anew. But now the eyes of the nation would be upon his exit. Vulgar newspapers would have great headlines about him. A hideous notoriety would be branded upon him, so that men would point him out in the street and whisper to one another the story of his humiliation. For years and years the Catholics of the country would speak his name with execration. It was terrible. And as if to put the very crown upon his despair, it was announced in the late afternoon of Wednesday, that the funeral would be held, not at the late minister's house as had been first arranged, but by request of the public, at the church over which Mr. Danforth had presided. Thus not a single circumstance was lacking to make Father Hanlon's transgression of the laws of his church

deliberate, defiant and notorious. He could not do it! Jo whom he had loved would not permit so great a misfortune to his friend if those cold lips could speak.

After hours of misery Father Hanlon left his room determined to put himself to the humiliation of going to Mrs. Danforth and telling her that he must revoke his promise. As he approached the Danforth house his cheeks burned with shame. If Mrs. Danforth were to look upon him as a coward would she not be right? Worse than that, would she not be justified in thinking him disloyal to the dead, and as wretchedly unworthy of the friendship her son had bestowed upon him?

"May the curse of God Almighty fall upon this brutal orthodoxy which creates enmities and destroys love!" Savagely the words flew from his lips as he walked along. Language like this was not customary with him; but now he would, he must, indulge the mood of bitterness and wrath. Over his friend and brother who was lying dead, he, Christ's minister, was forbidden to lift his voice in prayer! In the presence of heart-broken friends, he must not tell them of Josiah Danforth's Christ-like life! Looking upon the face of the man who of all men had taught him most of God, he could give no utterance to his gratitude or testimony of his love! And why? Why this unnatural, this unreligious silencing of his heart and voice? Because of a bloodthirsty theology that once made it meritorious to burn the heretic at

the stake, and still makes it deserving of eternal hell to kneel with him before the Father of all.

"The wrath and curse of God upon this theology, this hellish bigotry, this apostasy from Christ!"

The fierce words leaped from his lips again; his face was white with anger; his swift stride carried him on as though indignation were plying the lash upon his back. He passed the Danforth house with hardly a look, rounded the square and re-entered the hotel. Flinging himself into a chair in the solitude of his room, he folded his arms and bowed his head upon his breast. So long was his meditation that the room was dark and the early stars of March were shining in the sky when at last he moved. Lifting his face and gazing steadfastly upward, he murmured: "Jo, dear, great-hearted brother, from thy high station in the world of spirits, look down on me to-night. Yea, come near me and minister strength to me that I may be like Christ and thee, and may do Christ's work and thine!"

On the morning of Mr. Danforth's funeral, the church-doors had to be closed a full hour before services began. Sitting and standing within the building was the largest gathering its walls had ever contained. Outside, a group assembled at every window, satisfied if they could get but a glimpse at the final rites; while on the steps of the church stood a score of still later arrivals who, quite unable to see aught of the service, spoke

to one another in subdued voices of the holy life and the heroic end of him who lay dead within. Ten pews, five on either side of the coffin, which rested in the aisle directly in front of the pulpit, were reserved for Mr. Danforth's humble friends and comrades of Fraternity House. And these ten pews were filled. A full score of the swarthy sons of Italy were there, with a lesser representation of Poles, Austrians and Greeks. Their dress was shabby, some displaying starched bosoms, but unadorned with collars; others wearing the grimy clothes in which they worked all day at the shops. But their hearts were right, and as they gazed in mute sorrow at the form of him who had loved them, their eyes bore touching witness that they loved him in return.

As the hour struck, Mrs. Danforth entered the church through the chancel, leaning on the faithful arm of Dorothy. Then came the Unitarian clergyman who was to offer prayer; and last of all, clad in the black cassock of a priest, Ambrose Hanlon. One of Mr. Danforth's favorite hymns was sung; the minister, a true friend and disciple of him who was no more, spoke a touching prayer; and amid absolute stillness, the very depth of which was a token of the intense emotion of the congregation, Father Hanlon stepped into the pulpit. For quite a minute he stood silent, his clasped hands resting on the book-stand before him, his eyes bent upon the coffin beneath. Then he raised his pure, spiritual face, swept the audience with a glance and said:

"Dear friends, you will not expect many words from me to-day. The life of him we loved, at whose loss the hearts of some of us are breaking, delivered its own high message to us all so well that the words of no eulogist are needed to repeat it now. Perhaps it would have been better had this pulpit been silent to-day; that we might the better listen to the memories of him within our souls — memories that are now all that remain to us of his beautiful, holy and Christ-like life. But if some message must be spoken, if our common sorrow must find a voice ere we lay him to his rest, let the message be an invitation to lift your eyes from this dear form that will move among us no more, to the radiant, gifted, hopeful, prophet-spirit who only yesterday was with us. Look up from these poor elements of mortality, and from the pall of tragedy that enshadows them, to the Josiah Danforth that taught us how God's work should be done, and showed us in his spotless soul what manner of men God's human children should be. Let your gaze rest upon him as you knew him. Recall the voice whose grave and gentle accents have soothed the sorrows of many of you here, and bidden you to discern in the darkness of human affliction the shining vestiges of divine love and immortal hope; the voice which again pealed out in mighty inspiration its quickening challenge to conscience, its intrepid denunciation of wrong; the voice whose marvelous music has carried its lofty appeal into the souls of thousands

beyond the limits of this village, cleansing, uplifting and regenerating them, and associating them into a new brotherhood of the kingdom of God. Recall his fidelity as a friend; his wisdom as a counselor; his humility as a scholar; his ardor as a patriot; his zeal as a pastor; his sanctity as a child of the Infinite, and co-laborer with Christ. Thus recall Josiah Danforth and thus remember him for your strength and encouragement when assailed by the temptation either to be personally untrue to the highest righteousness, or to lose faith in the nobility of human character.

“I have urged you to remember him as he lived. Ah! but his heroic and holy death, shall we not forever remember that? That dark hour in Axton; those menacing fires of destructive passion; that threatening of the mob; that roar of vengeance; that beginning of bloodshed which might end no man could say in what horrors; and in the midst his fearless presence, his flashing eye, his imperial voice, his holding aloft of our country's flag; — then the nameless calamity, the dastardly explosion, the lifeless form of our hero and martyr, our friend and brother — this, though our lives were measured by ages instead of years, we cannot forget forever. This glorious death, this divine generosity of unselfishness, this falling as fall the patriot and the saint — how in this he teaches us a last God-like lesson! May we learn it well!

"My brother, the shadow has fallen on us heavily in the loss of thee. But the shadow is ours, not thine. Thou art with the immortal. In the high station to which thou hast been summoned in the world where no night or twilight falls, thou enjoyest the eternal radiance of infinite Love and Truth, the deathless day of the vision of God. We are going forward heavy-hearted in a gloom which is deeper since thou hast left us. May we prove worthy of thy friendship, thy teaching, thy noble word and heroic deed! May we be as pure and prayerful, as gentle and strong — yea and as fearless, if thy dread visitation should come to us and we should hear as thou didst, the call to die for duty, for conscience and for God."

It was with a strange sense of spiritual exaltation that Father Hanlon took his seat. Not only had he not been overcome with emotion as he had feared; but he had not been affected in the slightest by the anomaly of his position in a Unitarian pulpit, or even by any anticipations of his coming inevitable punishment. A kind of victorious happiness and thrilling joy diffused itself within his soul, and he felt profoundly at peace. He wondered himself at this interior experience; and the thought came to him, a thought which deepened his content, and trust and hope, that the spirit of his friend was very near, that the great soul of Josiah Danforth was uttering some ineffable greeting to his own.

XXX

Two days after Josiah Danforth had been laid away Father Hanlon received the following letter:

Rev. Ambrose Hanlon: Dear Sir,

The appalling news of your public participation in a Unitarian service has just reached me. Though I am overwhelmed at this action of yours, which amounts to practical apostasy, I am but little surprised at it. You have been driving toward heresy very rapidly for some time. My one regret is that I have been lenient with you for so long. Further leniency would only make me share your sin before God and man. It is now time for the utmost severity in my power to inflict. My sentence upon you, sir, is this: You are indefinitely suspended from the exercise of all priestly powers. You will at once depart for the Trappist monastery at Mt. Angel, there to remain strictly confined to the monastery grounds doing penance for an indefinite period, perhaps for life. Certainly while I live I will never either take you back into my diocese or recommend you to any other bishop.

Should you refuse to submit to this order I shall at once take steps to notify the bishops, clergy, and faithful of the country that you are a public apostate.

Do not attempt to see me. My house is closed to you. Your successor will take charge of your parish by the middle of next week.

SEBASTIAN SHYRNE.

Ambrose read the cruel words, let fall the letter from his shaking hands, and buried his head in his

arms upon the desk. Who will blame him if the sound of his sobbing filled the room and his stricken heart gave utterance to its pain in groans of agony? He was twenty-nine. He should have before him a long and abounding life, and he was sentenced to death. He had striven and prayed for Truth, honor, a pure conscience, and he was now in infamy. He had come to Axton just two years ago, and the cordiality of the towns-folk had brought forth within his heart the most tranquil content and the most dear hopes he had ever known; and now he was an outcast from all content and every hope forever. Mother and Margaret!—Oh, God, the thought of them turned the knife in the wound and drove it to the hilt again. He started from his chair and paced the room. There was a terrifying change in him. That ashen countenance, those haggard features, that look of wild despair in his swollen eyes, sad token of a heart that was broken and a mind that was stunned to dumb bewilderment, aged him twenty years. Up and down the narrow room he walked, flung himself into a chair, rose and walked again. He was planning nothing, purposing nothing; he was only suffering; only beholding the wreck and welter of his dreams and hopes, the irreparable, shattered ruins of his life.

The necessity of action brought a less agitated mind at last, and he faced the pressing problem which now he had not weeks and months, but only a few hours, for solving: Would he submit and re-

main in the church or refuse to submit and leave? Strange persistence of prejudice! The words "apostate," "renegade," and above all "former priest," still struck a chill into his heart. He shrank from the decision that would apply the terms to himself. These sentimentalities were contemptible. He knew it; but he could not hide from himself the fact that they were not without subtle influence upon his judgment. There were, of course, more rational aspects to the situation. He tried dispassionately to compare the alternatives before him. On the one hand was exile, with all the loneliness of that alien world in which the outcast priest finds himself. He pictured himself working at a desk, teaching in a class-room, and even digging in a trench. The consolation of fidelity to Truth would indeed remain to him; but his life would be wholly secular and quite remote from those spiritual purposes for which he wished to live. As for his mother and sister, true, they must suffer, whatever his choice; but incomparably their greatest sorrow, a sorrow unto death, would be visited upon them, if he went forth branded as an apostate priest. On the other hand was the prison of a Trappist monastery, where he would be detained perhaps for years, away from life, work and books and under the vigilant supervision of ignorant monks. But even so he would be still a priest, and member of the church; he would not inflict the irremediable wound upon his dear ones at home; and perhaps in a much shorter time than

now appeared likely, he would be restored to pastoral duties, and would see gathered about him another little flock, that would in time become as dear to him as his spiritual children of Axton. "Remain! Desert not your priesthood!" spoke again and again his traditional faith, his priestly consecration, and that almost ineradicable "Catholic sense" which the church of Rome stamps upon the soul and infuses into the blood of those that belong to her. That other Ideal, that austere Truth before whom he had uttered the vows of another loyalty, also appeared to him in this distracting hour. But she spoke no word; only gazed upon him with stern eyes that searched his soul. He looked at Truth; and put his old question: In a conflict of ideas, why give Truth exclusive primacy? Why incur disgrace and inflict suffering on others because Truth calls for it, though regard for self and the highest human love cry out against it? What right has Truth to say: "Thou shalt not have other gods before me!" Furthermore, perhaps a year or two of quiet retirement, even the enforced retirement of canonical punishment, might be a help to his soul. It would compose him. It would give him a better and broader view of his duty. It might show him cogent reasons against ever abandoning the church of his fathers.

Tradition, inbred prepossession, massive, mighty Catholicism won the day. Father Hanlon set about the sad task of packing up his books and

belongings, resolved to obey the bishop and become a prisoner of penance. He would not go home, but would write a long letter telling mother and Margaret everything, and would ask them to visit him at Mt. Angel. Then he would take the evening train from Axton to-morrow to begin his sentence at once, and meet his fate as soon and as manfully as he could.

One hour before train-time the following evening, he set out to say farewell to Mrs. Danforth. He was to tell no one else of his departure. Even Mary Kiley he had not the heart to see. He would write her a letter of good-bye and ask her prayers — no more. As he ascended the steps of the dear home of his deepest friendship, he found himself wishing that Miss Wakefield might be there. A pang shot through him at the thought of leaving her without a word. It would be horribly cruel. He saw now how much she had grown into his life; how precious was her friendship; how subtly pleasing had been her presence, her interest in him, her gentle solicitude for his welfare and sympathy for his sorrows. To leave her, and perhaps to leave her with no word of gratitude or friendliness, suddenly made his cup more bitter than he had yet found it. He hoped ardently that she might be within with Mrs. Danforth. How could he treat so heartlessly the sister-spirit of Danforth and himself?

Mrs. Danforth was alone. Almost the first words Father Hanlon said to her were; "I am

sorry Miss Wakefield is not here. I fear I shall not see her now. I have come to say good-bye."

"To say good-bye, friend Ambrose?" asked Mrs. Danforth in great surprise. "Art thou going to leave us?"

"Yes; the bishop has ordered me away," was his answer. He had come determined not to tell Mrs. Danforth the reason of his departure. But she knew too much of his past year's history not to suspect what had happened.

"This is very sudden," she said. "Is he whom thou callest bishop punishing thee for thy services to my son and to me?"

Ambrose then told her all, not concealing even the nature of his punishment.

The old Quakeress was greatly troubled that she had been the cause of such a calamity; but Ambrose protested that she should not thus look upon the situation.

"It would come anyway," he assured her. "It was inevitable. And as for that last tribute of my love for your son, I do not regret it. I am glad that, since so sorrowful a duty had to be done, you thought me worthy to do it. Both you and our dear one who is gone, I will remember in faithful affection forever. I know God better through having known Josiah Danforth."

"I am sure thou hast thought well over thy resolve to submit to this grievous punishment," said Mrs. Danforth, with half a question in her tone.

"I have thought over it till I am distracted," was the priest's disconsolate answer.

"Then I will say nothing to dissuade thee," she said. "My light is not thine, nor thine mine. Follow as the Spirit leads. I shall be even more desolate when thou art gone. And Dorothy will be greatly grieved."

They rose. Ambrose held out his hand, unable to say another word. The old saint held his hand in both hers, and raised it to her lips. Her tears fell fast as she murmured at the door: "God be with thee; God be with thee!"

Thus closed the history of his friendship with Josiah Danforth. Desolation unutterable closed in about his heart as he thought of it. He was alone in the midst of the valley of death. His friend was dead; his hopes were dead; his joy and zeal and enthusiasm dead, dead, dead. In that Trappist dungeon awaiting him he, too, would soon be dead; dead in intellect, dead in ambition — "Dead in honor!" cried a startling voice within him. His soul shrank from the accusation, and then yearned to leap forward to respond to the final appeal uttered in his heart: "Live! Obey Truth! Be free!" The inner admonition vanished away. With head bowed and spirit hopeless he made answer: "Too late!"

Half an hour later he bade a sorrowful and embarrassing good-bye to Nahum Cuttle and hastened to the station. The train was fifteen minutes late; and too restless to take a seat in the

waiting-room, he walked the platform with Sorrow at his side. It was a dark, cold night. A storm was near at hand, and already flurries of snow were whirled in the wind. Two years ago almost to the day, he had arrived in Axton on just such a night. How fitting that a storm had greeted him and that another was bidding him farewell! The storm of his life that had beaten him prostrate would never cease. For him no more sunshine, nor the glad light of a happy day; but only ruin and mournfulness until the release of death. "Ah! Church Catholic," he said aloud; "how rich are thy consolations, how crushing thy penalties!" The rich consolations were past; the crushing penalties beginning. He paused in his walk and looked down toward the village. The home-lights twinkled in the windows; the street lamps burned dimly in the wind; and faintly gleaming against the night could be discerned the gilt outlines of the cross upon his church. His church! "O God," he cried; "this is too much!"

"Father Hanlon," said a voice beside him.

"Miss Wakefield!" he exclaimed. "How glad that I am not to part from you without a word of farewell."

"I have been to Mrs. Danforth's," said Dorothy, speaking rapidly; "and she told me everything. Is it possible that you are going to submit to this?"

The hollow shriek of the engine half a mile away sounded in their ears.

"Yes, I am submitting," he said in a low voice that she could hardly hear.

"You must not do it," she cried. "In God's name don't do it. I would not mind the imprisonment of your body, horrible indignity as that is; but your character, your soul, your integrity, intellectual and spiritual, are you going to abandon these by spiritless submission to a bigoted bishop?"

A great flare of light shone upon them, the thunder of the train made further words useless for the moment, and the huge panting engine stood still at the station.

"Father Hanlon! Ambrose!" cried the girl. "Don't do it. You must not die the death of shame!"

He moved toward the train. "All aboard!" shouted the conductor, and the great driving-wheels began to move.

Dorothy caught his hand. "In the name of Truth, do not destroy the gifts of God in you. Josiah Danforth cries to you from his hero's grave to carry on his work."

The train drew on; all but the last two cars had passed them.

"Truth"—the passionate words fell swiftly from her lips, her hand tightened on his—"Truth demands your fidelity, your sacrifice and your life."

The last car rolled by; the wild wind rushed after it as though racing this mighty mechanism

of man ; the snow swirled madly about the station ; and on the platform, careless apparently of the tempest that would soon be at the height of its fury, stood the man and the woman, hand in hand.



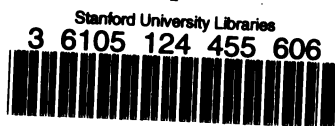


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